In the Trail of the Pack-Mule

BY

SID. H. NEALY

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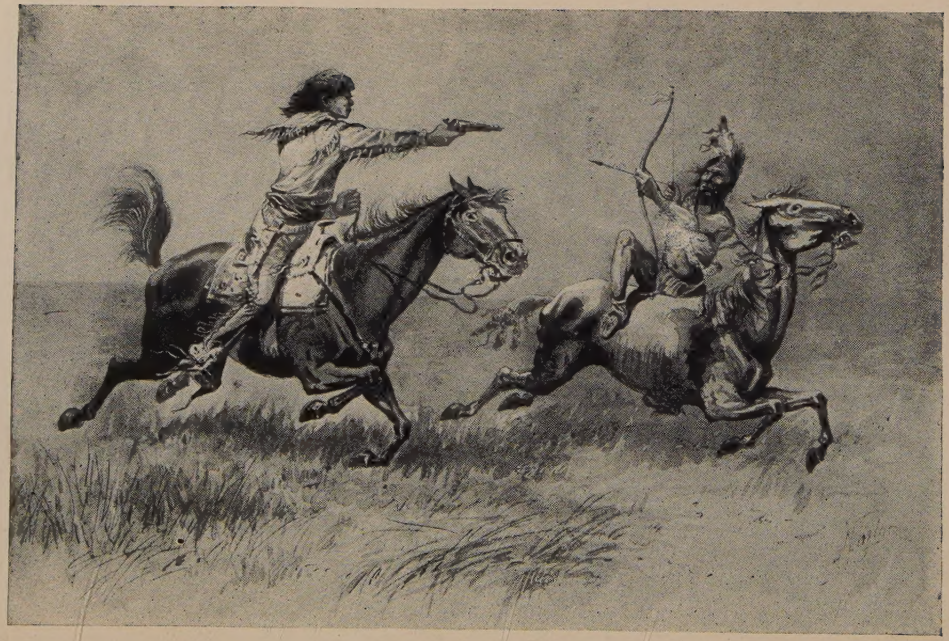

Death of Young Horse.

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In the Trail of the Pack-Mule

BY

SID H. NEALY

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

F. TENNYSON NEELY

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In the Trail of the Pack-Mule.

TO

SIDNEY

AND HIS COUSIN

CHARLEY,

TWO TYPICAL AMERICAN BOYS,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no subject more attractive to young America than frontier life and adventure. From the first foothold of our ancestors on Plymouth Rock the pioneers have pushed their way steadily and irresistibly into the unknown wilderness in the face of savage opposition from man and beast, until almost every square mile from the Atlantic to the Pacific has been the scene of exciting adventure.

The bare facts alone of the opening up and settlement of our country form the most interesting of history. But when almost every event in our national life has had nature's most picturesque and romantic stage setting the story of the United States has become the most fascinating of all historical literature.

Where is the American boy who has not been rudely disturbed by the midnight stroke of the clock as he pored over the adventures of those fearless Indian fighters, Benjamin Church, Captain John Smith, Captain John Mason, Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, Kit Carson, Generals Crook, Miles, and Custer,—or the narratives of those plucky and determined explorers, Lewis and Clark, Frémont,

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Pike, Clarence King, Dr. Hayden, Lieutenant Wheeler, or that intrepid veteran, Major J. W. Powell. These are the people who have blazed the way for others to follow, and the record of their brave and adventurous lives will afford the American for all time to come the most interesting of reading. No American boy need turn from the story of his own country for the picturesque and romantic in literature.

That indefinite line, our frontier, has disappeared altogether or is lost somewhere out on the Arizona desert. The American Indian, who has contested vigorously every foot of our advance to the Pacific, has practically ceased to have a national existence. Of course we have a few Indians left, but they are poor cowed creatures, herded like sheep upon reservations, sad relics of their brave race. And now, after we have deprived them of the richest continent on the globe our ungrateful Government issues a cruel edict compelling them to cut their hair and keep their faces clean.

Many of the older boys of to-day have seen something of frontier life themselves, but the characteristic scenes and figures of the wild West are rapidly disappearing. Even now the buffalo is gone, and his vast feeding grounds, the western plains, are cut up by barbed-wire fences into buckwheat fields, cabbage patches and onion beds. The Indian, bereft of his long hair, red paint, and war whoop, now wears tight shoes, smokes cigarettes, and lives in a board house. The cowboy's occupation is gone. He has rounded up his last herd, pawned his saddle, gun and chaparaios, and is now a prosaic brakeman on a freight train. The bicy-

cle has supplanted the broncho and the automobile now scurries where the "prairie schooner" crawled. The red desert is filled with $3 shoe advertisements, our magnificent forests are cut up into railroad ties, and all that was picturesque has gone forever.

Future generations of American boys will turn eagerly to every scrap of literature left by those who actually saw the Indian, the wild pony, the "whacker," the "puncher," the hunter and trapper in their native environment.

What is written of the frontier hereafter must be written by those who have received it second hand, and it will lack the spice of detail. It will read more like a fairy tale than history.

I have, therefore, in this little volume endeavored to contribute my mite to the history of the opening up of the great West by giving my youthful readers a narrative of the operations of one field party of the United States Geological Survey of the Territories, conducted under the direction of that eminent soldier, explorer, and geologist, the late Professor F. V. Hayden. This survey, in conjunction with the States, is now continuing its valuable work through the older States under the able directorship of Professor Walcott at Washington.

At the time of my narrative other parties of the Survey were at work in other sections of the West, but this account is typical of all. I trust my book will be taken only for what it is intended—a popular description of the everyday doings of a field party delving into the unknown topography,

geology, mineralogy, ethnology, and zoology of the Rocky Mountain region.

I will close with the statement that Ned Morse, our young hero, and all the characters introduced to the boys in this little book, are real and not at all imaginary beings. I knew everyone mentioned herein and, so far as I know, with four exceptions, they are alive to-day. Still, a long time has elapsed since I saw them gathered about the camp fire for the last time; many changes have taken place, and it may be that others have gone to their last rest. Dr. Hayden died in 1887. Professor Archer passed away three years after the events recorded herein. Poor Guns lies where we left him beyond the Great Divide, and Jack Sargent died as he had lived, a man without fear. He perished fighting at the side of General Custer in the last stand made by that brave officer in the tragedy of the Little Big Horn.

But Ned Morse, I assure you boys, still lives. I know him well, and he often sighs for the old-time scenes and his old-time comrades of the wild West. Ned is much older now, but not too old to enjoy outdoor life. I hunt with him away up in the north woods. Our snowshoes often leave miles of pretty lace-work tracks through those winter woods where we follow in the trail of the deer, caribou, moose, and lynx.

I have seen the swift deer drop in his flight with the flash of Ned's rifle. I have heard the crack of his Winchester followed by the thunderous crash to earth of the great bull moose. Our canoes have glided noiselessly together up the winding rivers and through the myriad of Maine's

crystal lakes. Ned has profited by the teachings of his old-time companion, Rocky Mountain Harry, and he has become a skillful hunter himself. Perhaps some day I will tell you boys more about Ned and his adventures. S. H. N.

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IN THE TRAIL OF THE PACK-MULE.

CHAPTER I.

A MEMBER OF CONGRESS sat at his desk in the House of Representatives at Washington. He was writing a letter. Not with a rapid, business-like stroke of the pen, but with a feeble, unsteady scrawl that made the letter sheet look as if a half-drowned fly escaping from the ink had crawled over its white surface. The letter covered but a page, yet perhaps few of the boys or girls who read this book could have deciphered that page without assistance from older and more experienced heads. As well might they try to translate a Runic inscription or an ancient Egyptian papyrus. But to-day, in all probability, those awkward hieroglyphics are carefully filed away, by the person to whom they were sent, as a valuable autographic memento of one of America's great statesmen.

The feeble old man folded the sheet, put it into an envelope, moistened the gum between his colorless lips, and sealed it tightly. Then, after addressing it in that same scrawly manner, he franked it. Senators and Representatives are not required to pay postage on their letters, but all are entitled to the franking privilege. Therefore,

the old gentleman wrote his name across the upper right-hand corner of the envelope, "Thaddeus Stevens, M. C." It was, indeed, Pennsylvania's honored legislator and statesman, known as the "Old Commoner," and who has long since been sleeping beneath the green grass of his native State.

Then Mr. Stevens clapped his hands together sharply two or three times. Instantly there was a scramble among the page boys, who had been sitting on the steps leading to the Speaker's desk. The first to reach him was a slender, active boy of fifteen.

"Well, Ned, first again, I see; the other fellows have got to get up early in the morning to beat you, haven't they?" said the "Old Commoner," jovially.

"The trouble with most of the other boys, I think, Mr. Stevens," said Ned, "is that they don't know the calls of the members quite as well as I do. Perhaps it's because I've been here longer than most of them."

"How is that, Ned?"

"Well, sir, I mean the way the different members clap their hands or snap their fingers to call the boys. I believe I can shut my eyes and tell the call of any member of the House, without seeing who it is, just by the sound."

"I suspect that we old boys have our peculiarities; but now tell me, how do you distinguish my call from the others?"

"Don't you know, Mr. Stevens, that you clap your hands together just four times?"

"Doubtless I do, then, Ned, if you say so."

"And," continued the boy, "there's Mr. O'Neill; he always snaps his fingers rapidly five or six times. Then there's Governor Newell; he taps on his desk with his paper knife. Mr. Windom always rises in his seat so the boys can see who is calling and snaps his fingers twice—no more, and Judge Holman gives but one loud clap of his hands. If Judge Scofield has a letter or paper to mail, he just holds it up and rattles it. Well, every member almost has some peculiar way of calling the boys."

"I see that you keep both your eyes and your ears open, Ned. You'll make a good wide-awake business man if you continue as alert when you grow up," and Mr. Stevens took Ned's hand and held it in his own and patted him on the back in a fatherly way.

"By the way, Ned," said he, "you are growing up to be a pretty tall boy, but for the past two years you've not been looking very robust. How long is it now that you have been with us?"

"I've been here five years, Mr. Stevens; I was appointed page when I was just ten years old."

"What do you do with yourself during the summer—after Congress has adjourned?"

"I go to school. Last year I was sick for four weeks and had to go into the country for awhile. I had a jolly time, though, and rode horseback every day."

The old statesman pondered a moment, then he looked into the boy's eyes and said:

"Ned, I've just been thinking—how would you like to take a trip into the Rocky Mountains this coming summer, or would your parents object to

your going so far from home?" Ned's eyes dilated and he almost gasped for breath, but finally managed to reply:

"Why, Mr. Stevens, I'd like it better than anything in the whole world. If—if—my father and mother would allow me to go, and I believe they would."

"Just ask them, Ned, and let me know their views on the subject, and we'll talk the matter over some other time." Then he asked the boy to post the letter and bring his mail.

The post-office of the House of Representatives is on the ground floor of the Capitol, and Ned went down the white marble stairway three steps at a jump, scarcely able to keep from giving a regular Indian war whoop at the bare possibility of going to the Rocky Mountains. Of all places on earth this was the chosen one with Ned. It was all so sudden, so unexpected, that Ned was nearly bereft of his senses.

Ned Morse was, as Mr. Stevens had said, a boy who kept both his eyes and ears open and made good use of them, too. He was quick to learn, and during the time he had served as a page boy in the House of Representatives he had made many stanch friends among the Congressmen by his respectful demeanor and his alertness in attending to business. Like all American boys, however, Ned was alive to anything like fun, and was among the first to tickle a sleeping member's nose with a feather, or to run through the corridors shouting "Call of the House," and then watch the Congressmen rush in pell-mell only to find the presiding officer asleep and Hon. Simon Wayback

making a long-winded speech, to empty galleries, on the "Advisability of Excluding the English Sparrow from American Soil."

Ned didn't hesitate to draw a fly with pen and ink on Hon. John D. Baldwin's spectacles, while that gentleman was out, and, with the rest of the boys, watch him return and read his mail while he tried to fan that persistent fly off with a palm leaf fan.

Among Ned's best friends were many men, then members of the House of Representatives, who have since held the highest offices in the gift of the people. These were James G. Blaine, James A. Garfield, Rutherford B. Hayes, Schuyler Colfax, William A. Wheeler, William Windom, Samuel S. Cox, Samuel J. Randall, George S. Boutwell, Roscoe Conkling, and many others whose names have gone into history among the most illustrious of American statesmen.

In due time Ned's name was presented to the Director of the Geological Survey by Mr. Stevens with the indorsement of many other Congressmen, and a week or so later he received a large official envelope containing his appointment in the Geological Survey as a "general assistant, to accompany a party in the field."

Notwithstanding Ned's misgivings, his parents gave their consent to his going. Like Mr. Stevens, they believed that the beneficial effect of an outdoor life would more than compensate the boy for the loss of a few months' schooling. From that day on Ned left all play and pranks to his comrades. His thoughts by day and night were of this new field of interest that had opened

up to him so unexpectedly. He thought of nothing else, talked of nothing else, dreamed of nothing else.

CHAPTER II.

Six weeks later Ned was speeding over the rails toward the setting sun. His trip was uneventful, and to him an uninteresting one until he had passed through Chicago and on through the great States of Illinois and Iowa.

Once west of the Missouri River his interest in his surroundings increased tenfold, for Nebraska was then a border State, and he was traversing ground familiar to him through stories he had read of emigrant trains moving slowly across the prairies to a still farther west, while half-naked redskins followed them like bloodhounds. Ned had seen scarcely anything but level land through Iowa, but he seemed not to feel that he was on the real Western prairies of his storybooks until Omaha was left behind, and the shrieking locomotive went whirling over the level expanse with only the telegraph poles to relieve the monotony. His eyes were now constantly on the alert, and he passed hours in the vain attempt to see both sides of the railroad at once. He was so far from home and everything appeared to him so different from the East. Possibly he expected to see a band of mounted Indians ride alongside the train and send a volley of arrows whizzing into the car windows at any moment. He changed seats a dozen times in so many min-

Bill Slade.

utes, first upon this side of the car, then upon that, for fear that something might escape his observation.

Along toward sunset the train flew past a little station without slacking speed, with only a hoarse shriek of the locomotive as a warning to the inhabitants to clear the way. Ned moved to that side of the car nearest the little settlement, and as the train whirled past the last board shanty he crossed to a seat opposite and looked out the window. There on the prairie, trudging along in single file, was a party of real live Pawnee Indians. Their blankets were drawn halfway over their feathered heads, for there was falling a cold, drizzling rain. Ned hoisted the window as quick as a flash, put out his head, and watched the redskins until the fast-moving train had left them far in the rear. From this moment he was all interest and excitement. He was really in the Indian country, and had seen a band of live Indians with his own eyes. True, he had seen dozens of real Indians at Washington, his home, and in real Indian toggery, too, but they were only delegations from the Western tribes who had come to the Capital on business connected with the welfare of their people; but now he had seen the Indian treading his native prairies. To Ned the Indian in Washington was something like the stuffed elephant in the museum. Those he had just seen tramping the prairie were like the great *Elephantis Africanis* careering through its native jungles. Yet the Pawnees he had seen were probably a party of inoffensive tramps who had been to the settle-

ments on a begging expedition and were returning to camp.

The morning of the third day out Ned was out of his berth in the sleeping car by daybreak and was rewarded by seeing several prong-horned antelope bound away over the plains as the train plunged on and on westward. Then later in the day the brakeman called him to the door and pointed out, away off in the southwest, what appeared to be a tiny white cloud far above the prairie. This, he told the boy, was his first glimpse of the Rocky Mountains. The white cloud in the faraway sky was the snow-clad summit of Longs Peak—one of the most beautiful peaks of the great Snowy Range.

Ned arrived in Denver about ten o'clock on the morning of May 8. He expected to find and report for duty to his chief, Professor Archer, at the hotel, but was disappointed. Professor Archer, the clerk said, had been stopping at the hotel, but all of the outfit were now in camp somewhere out on the prairie northwest—he thought about ten miles out. Some one of the "outfit," the clerk added, was in town almost every day, however, and he advised Ned to wait. If no one came in during the day he would see that he got to camp next day anyway. This use of the word "outfit" by the clerk was one of the first peculiarities of the great West Ned had noticed. He soon found that outfit was an exceedingly versatile word, doing duty for almost everything under the sun. A surveying camp was an "outfit," an emigrant train was an "outfit," a broncho saddle and spurs were an "outfit," a

silver or gold mine was an "outfit," a prospecting kit was an "outfit," a pocketknife and a bunch of keys in one's pocket were an "outfit"; in fact, everything in Denver was some sort of outfit. And before Ned had been in Denver two hours he concluded that Denver itself was the queerest outfit of the whole outfit.

In the morning Ned took a walk. At that time Denver was a small town, boasting of but four or five brick houses. Aside from these, it was a ragged collection of all sorts of frame houses, built along unpaved streets and with only a few sidewalks of planks. The streets were, for the most part, black prairie mud, from which great clouds of dust arose in dry weather and where the mud stuck like cement to one's boots and clothes after a rain. Scattered about through town were many shanties with rough plank sides and a large canvas answering the place of a roof. Like all early settlements, Denver was largely made up of drinking saloons and gambling houses, while around the outskirts of the town were Chinese shanties and greaser "dugouts." Along the banks of the Platte, just outside of the town, many Indian wigwams stood, either the abode of those vagabond redskins who lived by begging, or those who had come down from the mountains to trade.

The Denver streets were filled with pedestrians and horsemen of a dozen nationalities. A banker would wind his way down to his place of business through a crowd of cowboys clad in buckskin, with great clanking spurs dangling from their heels and an arsenal of guns and revolvers hanging to

their backs and belts. Again he would step aside to avoid a gang of wild and dirty looking fellows, known throughout the West as "greasers," armed to the teeth with revolvers and knives, standing on the corner smoking and jabbering away in Mexican Spanish. In front of the stores would be groups of forlorn looking Indian squaws squatting flat on the sidewalk, caring for the queer looking little papooses and watching the saddle ponies while the "bucks," or Indian men, were inside trading furs, bows and arrows, and other Indian handiwork for beads, bright calicoes, brass gimcracks and worthless baubles. Denver was a queer, wild-looking place in those days.

When Ned returned to the hotel from his walk he went to his room on the second floor. Being young, lithe, and full of life, as was his custom, he went upstairs two steps at a jump. When he got to his room he was all out of breath. He felt strangely affected, and was for a few minutes alarmed for fear he was going to be taken ill. But he soon felt relieved, and like himself again. Then he threw open the shutter of a window facing west. He had hardly taken his eyes off the great Rocky Mountains from the time he left Cheyenne until he reached Denver, but his view had been limited to that framed by a small car window. But now, without obstruction of any sort, he looked out upon a view that is not surpassed in the wide world. It was so magnificent that it almost took Ned's breath. For an hour he leaned out of the window looking upon the great panorama of prairie, mesa, foothills, and snow-clad mountains. Here from this window he saw three hundred

miles of the grandest of the Rocky Mountains looming up before him.

Beyond the stretch of fourteen miles of green prairie dotted with groves of cottonwoods a range of foothills arose ragged and picturesque. Fleecy clouds had thrown them into deep shadow, setting them out in all the stronger contrast against the swanlike whiteness of the snowy range. The sky looked bluer than Ned had ever seen it, and made the snow seem whiter than ever snow was before.

There was an astonishing distinctness to everything; all was so crisp, clear cut, and well defined. Ned noticed this particularly, but was too young a philosopher to stop to consider why it was so. He didn't know that the cause for this unusual clearness of the atmosphere had the effect awhile ago of taking his breath away, when he went upstairs two steps at a jump.

He saw the whole range of the Great Divide from Longs Peak on the north to Pikes Peak on the south. Between these two white giants at each end of the visible landscape many others stood like sentinels on guard high above their fellows. Among these were Evans, Gray, Torry, Lincoln, and Arapahoe peaks, each with its outline clearly marked against the western sky.

There was a knock at Ned's door and he was handed the card of Professor Archer, of the United States Geological Survey. He went below immediately and was cordially greeted by a gentleman whose genial face and friendly manner at once put the boy at his ease.

"So this is Ned, is it?"

"Yes, sir; and here is a letter Professor Hay-

den gave me to hand you," and the boy produced a letter introducing and commending Ned to the care of Professor Archer.

"Well, Ned, I'm glad to meet you. I hope you'll profit by your new experience; but, remember, it's not all play with us; there's lots of work and many hardships to endure. But I imagine you'll come out right side up and none the worse for a season out of doors in camp."

Ned spoke of the wonderful view from his window and how distinct it all was.

"Yes, and you'll find much out here that is entirely different from what you've been used to, Ned." Professor Archer talked to the boy about the whys and wherefores of this clear atmosphere. He explained to him that here the air was so rarefied that it acted as a lens or a pair of spectacles to his eyes in viewing the landscape before him. So light was the air that a short breath would fill his lungs to their utmost capacity. This was why Ned was so short of breath while coming upstairs in his usual manner. Why was the air so much lighter than it was in Washington? Because here in Denver he was a whole mile higher than he was at home. Think of it, you boys who live close to the seashore. How would you feel to be lifted by a balloon a mile into the air? You would find that your breathing was not so full and free as it was below. Denver is a mile above sea level, and yet it is on the level prairie.

Many of the peaks looming up in the west, Professor Archer told Ned, were three miles above the level of the ocean, or twenty-six times as high

as the top of Washington Monument at Washington, the highest masonry structure in the world.

This latter was a comparison Ned could readily appreciate, for he had lived where the cap of this beautiful white shaft could be seen for miles in any direction. He had been at the top and looked down upon the people below who appeared like so many ants crawling along the earth's surface. Twenty-six times as high as the Washington Monument. Think of it, and he was going to the summits of some of these very peaks.

Ned had read of the rarefied atmosphere of great elevations or heights, but never had it been so impressed upon his mind as now. Professor Archer's method of explanation of everything he talked about was so simple, so graphic, so interesting, that Ned felt jubilant at the prospect of being with him all summer long.

Professor Archer instructed him to leave packed in his trunk every article that he would not absolutely need during the summer and fall. He must take no extras, whatever. Every man of the outfit must take only that which could be stored in a small canvas bag. The trunks would be placed in the survey storeroom in Denver until the parties' return. He told the boy that he would send a saddle horse in from camp for him the next day; then he departed.

Ned took from his trunk only the heaviest and strongest of clothing, among which were several thick gray and blue flannel shirts. One of these he put on. Then he put on a pair of heavy knee high boots, and, after purchasing a great wide-

brimmed soft felt hat, he glanced at himself in the mirror and found that there was quite a wild western look about his "outfit."

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning Ned, while waiting for the saddle horse to be sent to take him to camp, was struck by the wildly picturesque appearance of two men riding rapidly down the street. They wore broad sombreros, or soft light felt hats, beneath which hung their long, shaggy hair, falling to their shoulders. Both wore brown canvas overalls held to their waists with broad leather belts. One pair was decorated down the side seams with buckskin fringe, while the other had two great flaps of sheepskin with the wool on across the upper part of each leg. Both men wore enormous spurs, and carried revolvers in leather holsters hanging from their cartridge belts. Below the thigh the holsters were secured around the right leg with a smaller strap to steady it while riding. It was a genuine wild western "outfit" that came galloping down the street, and now Ned noticed that they were leading by a long lariat a third horse. Could that be the saddle horse sent by Professor Archer, thought Ned. But before the boy could answer his own question the two horsemen pulled suddenly up at the hotel door, and one fellow threw his leg over the saddle and was on the ground before his horse had fairly stopped. Then he heard them inquire

for him, and in a minute he was being greeted as a comrade by the two shaggy fellows.

"Well, boy, here's your hoss, an' ef you're ready we'll just strike for camp. You can leave yer trunk an' other fixins here an' they'll be taken to the storehouse."

When Ned found himself in the saddle the comrade of two real wild western cowboys such as he had taken such a delight in reading about he could hardly contain himself. He found that his companions were Bill Slade and Shep Medway, two mule packers of the outfit—or, as they were known here in the West, "whackers."

After passing through a conglomeration of Chinese and other shanties outside real Denver the three crossed the Platte River on a rickety wooden bridge and galloped over the plain northwest. This was an experience the boy would never forget. He was at last on the great Western Plains, astride of a real Colorado broncho.

There were no fences in those days about Denver to obstruct travel. The prairie was open to all alike, and for six miles the boy and his two strange comrades rode much of the time in an easy canter.

"Guess you ain't never been out hyar in this kentry before, hev ye, boy?" asked Bill Slade.

"No, sir; but I've read a great deal about the Rocky Mountains and about the Indians and pioneers."

"Well, you'll find it a putty tough kentry for a boy that's never had any hard knocks; but I guess ye'll git 'long fust rate. You stick ter me an' Shep here an' we'll see you through all right. If

a grizzly ever gits ter huggin' ye, jest tell him Bill Slade's yer friend and he'll drap ye and run like a whipped dog," and Bill laughed at his own joke.

"Are there truly any grizzlies around here?" asked Ned.

"Well, there ain't so many about camp just now. They don't like tough meat like me and Shep here and the rest of the fellers, but I 'low they'll be around when they find thar's suthin' young and tender like you in the outfit," and Ned saw Bill wink at Shep.

"I'm not afraid of a little thing like a grizzly," replied Ned. "Why I stood once within five feet of a grizzly, and a big one, too, and I wasn't any more afraid of him than I am of you this minute."

"Dead grizzly, heh?"

"No, sir, a real live one."

"Oho!" exclaimed Bill. "When was all this, boy?"

"In a menagerie at Washington. The grizzly was in a cage."

"See here, Bill, after that you'd better drap grizzlies and talk 'bout suthin' you know more about," and Shep laughed heartily at Bill's expense.

The three horsemen were now making straight for a grove of large cottonwood trees on the prairie. Soon Ned discovered white tents scattered through the green foliage, and beyond the grove a stream of water glistening in the sunlight. It was a beautiful camping place, with the great range of snow-covered mountains for a back-

Ned arose in his stirrups every minute.

ground. In a few minutes they rode into the grove and dismounted.

Professor Archer introduced Ned to everyone in camp, and requested one of the packers to assist him in putting up a tent for himself. After the tent was up Ned dug a little trench all around it to drain away the water in wet weather, and when his bed of blankets was nicely spread inside, the boy was the proudest inhabitant of Camp Cottonwood.

He spent most of the afternoon walking about, through the grove and down to the creek, that ran close by and supplied the camp with water. Ned was now in a real camp for the first time in his life, and was about to enter upon an experience entirely new to him. He was among a strange people, far from home, and was to traverse a country a portion of which had as yet never borne the footprints of civilized man, a privilege probably left to no boy of to-day, since the phenomenal growth of the great West has filled what was then the Rocky Mountain wilderness, with hundreds of busy, smoky, hustling mining towns, and the then trackless prairies with cultivated ranches. Ned, however, had profited by his summer trips to the country after the adjournment of Congress, and had the advantage over many city boys of his age in being able to saddle his own horse and manage it, too, after he was in the saddle. He was a practical fellow, and could easily adapt himself to circumstances and surroundings, and he took to life in a tent as naturally as a duck takes to water. He was enthusiastic over everything, and made friends with

everybody. Camp Cottonwood was the headquarters or "outfitting" camp of the Geological Survey. The grove of cottonwoods in which it was situated was on Clear Creek, six miles northwest of Denver. This stream came winding down from the Rocky Mountains, then through a gap in the foothills at Golden, and over fourteen miles of prairie before it reached the cottonwood grove. Just why it should have received the name of Clear Creek was never made quite clear to those in camp. Articles of underclothing washed in Clear Creek at Camp Cottonwood generally dried out with a varied assortment of mud streaks resembling the marbling of castile soap. Gray flannel was, therefore, the most popular material for shirts among those in camp. Mud doesn't show so much on gray flannel.

The tents of the camp were of the "A" pattern, and a very comfortable size, too. A larger tent was used as the regular mess tent when it rained. Generally, however, a couple of dry goods boxes served as a table, when spread with an oilcloth, out under the shade of the cottonwoods. A starch box turned on end served each man as a chair. However, all these luxuries were soon to be abandoned for an outfit of far greater simplicity.

The third day after Ned reached camp there arrived Mr. Beuchler, a topographer, from Washington, who completed the number assigned by Professor Hayden, director, for this division of the general Survey. There were fourteen men in all, including Ned, or "thirteen and three-quarters," as Mr. Todd, one of the topographers, jokingly observed, when summing up the net available

force preparing to invade the great wilderness. Mr. Todd, who was one of the old campaigners of the Survey, was inclined to tease the young "tenderfoot," as newcomers in the wild West are termed.

Ned replied that, according to his count, there were just eleven men, a boy and two topographers. Thereupon Mr. Todd changed the subject.

The roster of Camp Cottonwood was now as follows: Marvin Archer, geologist and chief of division; Norman Brady, geologist; Heinrich Beuchler and Stacy Todd, topographers; Hugh Negley, artist; Professor Wilson, entomologist; Lieutenant Barrington, United States Army, detailed to accompany the expedition as naturalist; Edward Morse, general assistant; Harry Yont, hunter; Shep Medway, Bill Slade, Bob White, and Jack Sargent, packers, and George Bowlin (colored), cook.

Quite naturally Ned was attracted more to the hunter and packers than to the scientific corps. There was one member of this corps whom Ned disliked. This was Heinrich Beuchler, topographer. Mr. Beuchler, from over the sea, insisted on referring to Ned always as "dot leedle poy," much to the latter's discomfort. The buckskin shirts and leggings, beaded and fringed, the chaparaios, or "chaps" (leather overalls), the broad sombreros, the well-filled cartridge belts and fantastically decorated saddles, and free and easy manners of the former were of far greater interest to him than the hammers, tripods, theodolites, barometers, and chemicals of the geologists, topographers, meteorologists, and naturalists. So there

sprung up at once a mutual good-fellowship between Ned, Harry, Bill, Shep, Bob, and Jack. He was with them everywhere, and always ready to lend a helping hand either in subduing a fractious broncho of the herd, "breaking in" a pack mule, or carrying orders between camp and Denver. He was favored with the first choice of riding animals from the herd, and chose a wiry little "clay bank" mustang, which he immediately named "Buckskin," because of its color.

CHAPTER IV.

Seldom a day passed when Ned did not gallop across the prairie to Denver on Buckskin, accompanied by the old hunter, Harry Yont, for Ned and Harry had already become almost inseparable companions. It was an interesting group that gathered nightly about the huge camp fire at Camp Cottonwood. Scientist and "mule whacker" sat side by side, smoking and discussing almost every subject under the sun, from the tremendous geologic upheavals of bygone ages to the merits of bean soup and salt pork. Paleontology, theology, conchology, and almost every other ology was nightly touched upon. But these camp-fire meetings, no matter how abstruce or scientific some of the subjects under discussion might be, invariably ended in a series of regular camp-fire yarns of adventure more or less veracious. A camp fire is always cheerful, even when not required for warmth, and, after dark, as the flames of the huge

Jack Sargent.

fire, built in the center of the group of white tents, threw their ruddy light far up the trunks of the surrounding trees, and the wood hissed and crackled merrily, the hard work and annoyances of the day just passed would be forgotten, and the glow would shine on the better side of human nature only. It was always late before anyone cared to break the mystic circle by going to bed.

Scientific discussion and story-telling, however, did not occupy all the time. Oftentimes there was a diversion in the shape of a song. Mr. Beuchler was occasionally induced, either by threats of a fish story from Brady or the entreaties of his comrades, to sing "Corporal Schnapps." Then Bill Slade would be called upon. Bill had a voice. What Bill's voice lacked in musical culture was made up in quantity, breadth, and depth. It would have done honor to any full-grown masculine bovine. Bill's ideas of music, too, were peculiar; so are the bull's. His favorite song was one in which were recounted the glories of the "Days of 49," and of the heroes of that eventful time, foremost among which:

> "Thar wuz Buffler Bill, who could outroar
> A buffler bull, you bet!
> He'd roar all day, and he'd roar all night,
> An' I guess he's a-roarin' yet."

If Bill's voice wasn't heard in Denver, six miles away, when he indulged in this song, it was no fault of his.

The packers, with their half Indian and half Mexican dress, reclining upon the ground, min-

gling the puffs from their pipes with the smoke of the fire, lent a picturesque effect to this nightly camp-fire group. To Ned this element of Camp Cottonwood was by far the most entertaining, and he never tired of the yarns that were spun.

Bill Slade was a veteran mule packer. He was an expert in his line, had been connected with the Survey in its field work for several years, and was believed among his fellows to possess the gift of tying the "purtiest line acrost a pack saddle that mortal man ever sot eyes onto." Bob White was an expert packer, too; but Bob couldn't sing like Bill. His imagination, however, was a magazine of unlimited capacity, from which he could draw stories, any one of which would have put our old-time friend Munchausen to the blush. Shep Medway was another expert, and if there was a bucking broncho to be subdued it was said that it was only necessary to whisper Shep's magic name in the broncho's ear and he instantly became as docile as a lamb. Jack Sargent was another. Jack hadn't much "book l'arnin'," but he could have given the most learned scholar valuable and original points on "hosses and muils." The hunter, grizzled, weather-beaten, good-natured old Harry Yont, known to all as "Rocky Mountain Harry," formed one of the most picturesque figures of the group. Harry's duties were to keep the camp larder supplied with fresh game, and whenever he drew a bead upon a black-tail deer the cook was certain to have black-tail for dinner, for his long, double-barreled, muzzle-loading rifle never failed. The services of such a man as the old hunter are almost indispensable to an expedi-

tion of this sort, and, together with his two horses, he had been hired to keep the camp supplied with fresh meat and for such other services as might be required of him. He was a character of more than ordinary interest, and the story of his life was one full of adventure, yet all that was known of the history of this old fellow had been gotten from him bit by bit, and even his immediate associates, the packers, had never yet heard him spin a regular camp-fire story of adventure. Having lived since his earliest recollections among the wilds of the Rockies, and knowing nothing of any other life, the killing of a bear, a mountain lion, or a brush with the Indians was to Harry an event scarcely worth mentioning, unless it had been accompanied by an unusually exciting incident. But when he did talk, no one dreamed of doubting his simple, unvarnished tale. Ned and Harry were day by day becoming great chums, and after all others of the camp had turned in for the night they would sit in the latter's tent and, by the light of a candle stuck in the mouth of a bottle, talk until midnight.

In a week after Ned's arrival at Camp Cottonwood he had become a general favorite, and as much a part and parcel of the "outfit" as any of its fourteen members. There was much to be done, too, and the packers were now up by daybreak and at their task of hauling the supplies from Denver, that were to last the party during the first stage of their journey. The commissary division of the outfit was busy, too, sending provisions from Denver to remote mining towns at various points in the territory, with which to

supply the several field parties before they should cross the mountains, and the "Great Divide" should shut them off from the luxuries of civilization. These luxuries consisted of dried beans, bacon, hams, hominy, hard tack, canned corn, flour, coffee, tea, condensed milk, and dried fruits.

The work of outfitting four parties such as that at Camp Cottonwood, aggregating sixty men, for eight or ten months' field work in a wilderness separated from civilization by miles of snow-covered mountains, is no small matter. The pack mules must be trained to their strange burdens; provisions, ammunition and surveying apparatus must be carefully, safely, and compactly stowed away in packing boxes. Tents, clothing, and other necessaries must be gotten into the smallest possible space, for everything must be carried upon the backs of mules—those strong, patient, sure-footed, and most useful of animals. Ned was always among the first up and about in the morning, ready and anxious to assist in anything that was to be done.

One night after he had retired to his tent and was just about to enter dreamland, some one at his tent flap called his name.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It's me, Ned; it's Harry. Are ye asleep, boy?"

"No; come in, Harry," and Ned arose, scratched a match, and lighted a candle.

"I ain't comin' in, Ned, but just wanted to ask ye if ye wouldn't like ter git up airly an' go out after antelope with me." The week had been a busy one getting the party ready for the field; the camp had been well supplied with fresh meat,

and this was the first opportunity Harry had found to go hunting.

"I should say I did want to go. When must we start, Harry?" asked Ned excitedly, for his limited experience with a gun in shooting jay birds and woodpeckers in the Virginia woods had given him the true hunter's love for the sport. But to go on an antelope hunt on the prairies, and with such a person as Rocky Mountain Harry. Ned didn't get a wink of sleep till long after midnight.

The first signs of daylight were just visible in the east when Ned was up and at Harry's tent, but Harry was gone. The boy almost choked with disappointment. Then he went to his tent and threw himself down on his blankets.

"I guess he thought because I was only a boy it wouldn't be right to wake me up so early; but if I ever get a chance I'll show him I can stand a great deal more than he thinks I can. Men never give boys half a chance, and ——" There was a sound of horses coming, and Ned, looking out, saw Harry coming, leading Tex and Buckskin, both saddled, and the hunter's pack horse, Abe, fitted out with a sawbuck pack saddle.

"Well, Ned, are ye ready, my boy?" asked Harry.

"Inded I am, Harry. I thought you'd gone off without me," and Ned sprang to his feet delighted.

"Why, boy, I wouldn't a gone without ye for a thousan' dollars. But I've been up an hour; made coffee, went out and catched the critters, and we must eat a bite now an' be off, 'cause I'm thinkin' we'll have to ride a consid'ble distance.

Antelope's gettin' sorter sca'se nowadays round hyar; but some time ye'll have ter go with me ter the Big Horn, Ned, where the's lots of game." Then they tied their horses' lariats to the limb of a tree and sat down to eat a bite and take a cup of coffee before starting.

Harry never ended a talk with Ned about hunting (for what else could the good old fellow talk of?) without this same observation, "You'll have to go with me ter the Big Horn some time, Ned." The "Big Horn" was to Harry what the Happy Hunting ground is to the Indian; it was to him the "land flowing with milk and honey." In other words, in the Big Horn country a mountain lion might be lurking in any tree; a grizzly bear might appear from behind any rock or a herd of elk might be found in any ravine. The Big Horn country was a sanctuary for almost every description of game; therefore, the old hunter never tired of talking of it in his quiet, almost pathetic way. He had spent much of his life among the mountains and valleys of the Big Horn when the entire region still bore across its surface in the school atlases the word "Unexplored." But Harry had been tempted to roam, and he now found himself constantly longing for his old haunts.

"I've got a pile o' grub stowed away in that bag on Tex, Ned," said he, "'cause maybe we mayn't git back afore night, and I 'low you'll be hungry as a bar all the time you're out." Then, having finished their breakfast of cold biscuit, fried ham, fried hominy, and coffee, they mounted their horses, and fording Clear Creek, struck off

across the prairie, and were miles away before another soul was stirring at Camp Cottonwood.

The air was cool and refreshing. Queer little short-tailed owls flitted along before the hunters, staring at them with their great yellow eyes, like little demons luring them to destruction. A tempest in a teapot was raised whenever they passed through a prairie dog village, of which there were dozens. The dogs would whisk out of their holes, skip upon their mounds, bark, and whisk back again in the twinkling of an eye. This performance, kept up by hundreds of the little fellows, made their number appear ten times greater than it really was, and it seemed to Ned that they were moving through a sea of them. From every little prairie pond or lake hundreds of wild duck arose and fluttered off in their peculiar wedge-shaped flocks. Blue cranes and long-billed curlews, too, were seen on every side, and occasionally a belated coyote went slinking over the prairie with his tail between his legs, his head bent low down, eying the intruders first over one shoulder and then the other with a guilty, hangdog look. The coyote's manner generally is that of a criminal sneak. Ned arose in his stirrups every minute and scanned the prairie ahead. After awhile the sun made its appearance above the prairie horizon, a round, red ball of fire. With its first light they were enabled to see quite a distance ahead, and the plain seemed to be alive with wild fowl of every sort, comical jack rabbits, with their great awkward leap and exaggerated ears, prong-horned antelope, and black-tail deer. The latter kept plenty of space between themselves and the hunters. It was

a glorious morning, and not only Ned and Harry, but even the horses seemed to be in the best of spirits.

CHAPTER V.

As the sun rose higher and it became light enough to see far ahead, Texas would every few minutes give a sort of stifled snort, at the same time keeping his eyes upon some object off to the west, and his ears pricked forward.

"What's the matter with Tex, Harry?" asked Ned, after the horse had repeated this performance several times.

"He's talkin' to me, Ned. Didn't know Tex could talk, did ye?" and the old fellow smiled all over his good-natured, weather-beaten face.

"Talking, Harry? What do you mean?"

"Well, Ned, Tex knows we're huntin' antelope jest as well as you do; and when he snorts that-a-way he says, 'Harry, old boy, thar's yer antelope critter right whar I'm lookin'.' An' Tex always knows what he's talkin' about, too; can't fool Tex, Ned." At this moment Tex gave another suppressed snort, at the same time coming to a halt, and before Ned could realize it, Harry was down from the saddle telling him to follow. The horses were left standing where they were. Harry walked rapidly forward, stooping lower by degrees as he advanced, to a rise in the prairie a hundred yards ahead. He was followed closely by Ned, the boy trembling with excitement. Soon the hunter dropped upon his knees, motioning to the boy to

Here Bob White came dashing up.

do the same. The two crawled on all fours a few yards farther, when suddenly Harry threw himself flat upon the ground. Then raising his head he peeped through a knot of sagebrush in front of him. The look seemed to satisfy him. Turning he motioned Ned to approach, but to do so carefully. When the boy reached him he spoke in a whisper, telling him to peep through the brush. Ned did so and saw three antelope, apparently a hundred and fifty yards off.

"Now, Ned, for the life of ye, don't make a noise, but raise yer gun and aim at the big feller up nighest us here—the one lookin' this way. Don't pull the trigger till I say three. I'll take a pull at the one way down the slope thar."

Ned rested his left elbow upon the ground, taking deliberate aim, but rather nervous with excitement. Harry's rifle was a double-barreled one, the barrels being one on top of the other, instead of side by side, as usual with double-barreled firearms. It was nearly a foot longer than the ordinary rifle, and its weight was correspondingly heavy. Harry drew from two rings upon the side of the rifle what at first appeared to be two separate ramrods. The ends of these he stuck in the ground, showing that they were fastened together near the upper ends, and when spread apart formed a sawbuck. Upon this sawbuck the old hunter rested his strange rifle. Then he took deliberate aim and whispered to Ned.

"Now, don't shoot till I say three; careful now, boy—one—two—three!" The two shots sounded like one, and Ned would have jumped to his feet

if Harry had not reached out his hand and prevented him.

"Keep quiet, boy. Lie still. That other antelope—No, I guess you missed your meat, boy; yes, sir, he's gone. See 'em skimmin' off together thar? But they'll be back if they don't see us, when they find tother one ain't with 'em." The hunter knew his game. The one down the slope lay dead by Harry's bullet, while the other two were bounding wildly off over the prairie, and soon they looked like two moving spots of white.

"Guess they're gone for good, aren't they, Harry?"

"No; they'll go till they find the other one ain't along with them, then they'll come back; an' when they do, Ned, yer mustn't shake so. Jest aim like ye wuz aimin' at a mark on a tree, an' don't git narvus-like. Ye shook afore, Ned, like ye had the ager. That's what we call the buck-ager. Lots o' older hunters than you gits it, Ned, and I know'd one Injun who took it so bad onct that a big elk passed right by him an' he forgot he had a gun till the critter was nigh out o' sight an'—Sh! Thar's the antelope comin' back, boy. Now, wait till they come clost up ter the dead one, an' don't shoot till yer sartin ye've got yer meat."

The two antelopes were returning, but slowly. They were circling about their dead comrade several hundred yards away, but gradually drawing nearer. Every few minutes they would turn and bound off as though from a gunshot, but would as suddenly turn again and draw nearer. Their native curiosity was luring them back by degrees to where the dead animal lay, and possibly to their

own destruction. Ned had put another cartridge into his rifle.

"Git yer gun ready, boy, but don't hurry. Jest aim stiddy and bang away. I'm not goin' ter shoot, 'cause it might pester ye." Ned brought his rifle to bear upon one of the antelope and aimed as steadily as he could, but found himself growing more nervous as the animal approached.

"Shall I"—bang! His gun had gone off, he knew not how. Both antelopes bounded off, but one fell. Ned was up in an instant, and so was the antelope, and gone.

"No use, Ned. They won't come back now. We'll have to move on." Then he turned and gave two or three peculiar whistles, something like the call of "Bob White."

"That's for Tex, Ned," said he. Both watched and soon there appeared above the hollow in the prairie, where they had left the horses, the ears, forelock, and nose of Tex. He was closely followed by the other horses. Tex came forward with a steady, unhesitating step, as though he understood thoroughly what was wanted of him. The business-like air of the noble animal delighted Ned, and he patted Tex upon the nose and neck, but though evidently pleased to receive the petting, he shoved Ned unceremoniously aside with his nose and stepped briskly ahead toward his master. Nor did he stop until he had reached Harry and had rubbed his nose against him several times with an impatient little whinny.

"Well, Tex, old boy, here it is," said Harry, producing a couple of lumps of sugar. Tex had behaved himself as a well-regulated hunting horse

should do, and his duty being performed, he had come forward for his well-earned reward.

"That's in my agreement with Uncle Sam, Ned," explained Harry. "I agree to furnish my own horses, but the Gov'ment is required to furnish me sugar for Tex."

Harry secured the antelope to the pack saddle with a rope and then mounted Tex. Ned had just gotten himself seated in the saddle when he spied something on the prairie that excited his curiosity.

"What is that, I wonder, out there?" he asked, pointing in the direction the frighted antelopes had taken. Harry shaded his eyes a minute and exclaimed:

"It's an antelope, shore. An' I believe a dead one. Boy, I guess ye killed yer game, after all."

Ned waited for no more, but galloped over the prairie. When only a short distance away he turned and waved his hat, shouting back to Harry:

"I've got him. I've got him."

When Harry rode up they examined the animal, and found he had been shot straight through the body, but the poor brute had kept on until it fell, while its companion had disappeared in the distance.

It was a glorious day for Ned. Here was game to be proud of. Harry was as pleased at Ned's success as the boy was himself.

"Well, boy, you've got a powerful nice antelope here, but you'll have ter go with me to the Big Horn country some time whar ye can git lots of bear and elk and buffler and sich. Thar's game as is game on the Big Horn."

Ned sat down and examined the antelope closely. It was a curiosity to him, as the two dead ones were the first he had ever seen at close range. Ned found them not nearly so graceful as the red deer he had seen the hunters bring home from the mountains of Virginia. On the contrary, the "prong horn," as he is known in the West, is a queer looking, awkward-shaped fellow, with a goat-like head and eyes, and his horns are simply ugly shaped prongs, sticking out of an uglier shaped head, at an awkward angle. The hair is exceedingly coarse and, as Ned expressed it, "feels as dry and coarse as sawdust." It is yellowish brown generally, with white under the throat and belly, the tail and buttocks are entirely white, and it was these that Ned so often saw away off on the prairie, apparently tiny snowflakes slowly rising and falling. Indeed, Ned soon found that this white tail-end was the one the keen-sighted antelope generally presented to the hunter. Like his cousins, the deer, the antelope is imbued with great curiosity, and this trait frequently brings him within range of the hunter, who simply has to stand on his head or otherwise distort himself to entice the wondering animal within shot. There are four or five together usually; sometimes, however, herds of eighteen or twenty are seen bounding across the sagebrush prairies.

CHAPTER VI.

Ned longed to reach camp and exhibit his prize to Shep and Bill and the others; and, too, he wanted to write home and tell of his success. Wouldn't his chums at Washington envy him when they heard of his achievement on the plains of the great West. And wouldn't he have some fine trophies to exhibit to them when he returned in the fall. Maybe he might yet kill a grizzly bear; who knows. Wouldn't the antelope's head mounted make a fine hall ornament at home. These were Ned's thoughts as they slowly rode eastward across the prairie toward Camp Cottonwood, driving the pack horse before them. Gradually Harry and Ned drifted into conversation again.

"I'm glad ye got yer game, boy. It'll be something for ye to write home and tell 'em about. I s'pose ye don't have no prong horns in Washington?" Poor old Harry's ideas of the world were limited.

"No, Harry, only stuffed ones in the National Museum. They have almost every sort of animal there—dead ones stuffed and made to look like life. The Museum is an awfully nice place to go to. They've got specimens of every sort of mineral, stone, marble, coal, precious stones, fish, birds, and almost everything else in the world. I never get tired of going there. I've been there a hundred times, I think, and I believe I see something new every time I go. Harry, how I wish you could come to Washington some time, and I'd

Tightening up.

take you all through it and all over the Capitol building, away up on the dome, and through the other public buildings."

"Guess they've got nice houses there—as nice as the Denver houses, ain't they?" Denver was the largest collection of civilized habitations Harry had ever seen. Ned laughed in spite of himself.

"Why, Harry," said Ned, "the best house in Denver is only an Indian wigwam compared with the great public buildings at Washington. There's the Capitol alone, that cost fifteen times as much as everything in Denver; with its great white dome and marble columns, stairways, and its House of Representatives, Senate and Supreme Court rooms, and Statuary Hall, and corridors. And there's the Patent Office, built all of white marble that alone covers almost half as much ground as Denver, where you can see in great glass cases models of thousands of machines. Then there's the Treasury—a great granite building, with long rows of columns as big around as this horse, and where they have steel vaults filled to the ceilings with gold and silver money and greenbacks. Then there's the National Museum and Smithsonian Institution, where you can see every sort of strange thing—why, Harry," said Ned enthusiastically, "I'd give a thousand dollars if you could see it all. They've got in the National Museum the very clothes that Washington wore, and his tent, saddle, sword, and whole camping outfit, and General Jackson's, too. And they've got the original Declaration of Independence, and——"

"Ain't they get any Injins there, Ned?"

"They've got plaster casts of Indians, all painted just like life and dressed in real Indian clothing —all so natural that you can almost see them breathe. But, then, lots of Indians come to Washington every year to attend to business with the Indian Office. They come dressed in their red blankets, buckskin, beads, feathers, and paint, too, and we boys follow them all around town to look at them, and once I traded my pocketknife to one of them for a beaded knife sheath, and I've got it yet. They always say they come to Washington to have a talk with the 'Great Father'—that's what they call the President. They think he's the great father of everybody. They go to the White House—that's what the President's house is called—and go into the great fine East Room and squat in a circle on the carpet and pass the pipe of peace all around before they say a word. Then the chief gets up and talks in Indian, telling the President what the Indians want. And a fellow they have with them, who can talk our language and Indian, too, interprets what the chief says to the President as he goes along. Then the President makes a little speech to them and tells them that he will see the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and tell him what the Indians want, and then he shakes hands with them and tells them he hopes they will continue to live at peace with their white brothers in the great West."

All this interested Harry very much. He had some vague ideas about the relation existing between the Government and the Indians, but he did not know that all the red men left in the

United States were really wards of the Government and that they lived on reservations set aside for them for their exclusive use, received regular annuities in food, horses, blankets, clothing, and other things, costing many thousands of dollars, for lands of theirs the United States had taken and in return for their keeping at peace with the whites.

"Wish the President would come out here some time, Ned, and see how the red rascals jump their reservations, steal the people's horses, and kill their cattle." By "jumping" their reservations, Harry meant leaving their reservations in armed parties and scouting around on the white people's lands in violation of their treaty with the Government.

Ned explained that the President was kept informed of everything of the sort by telegraph—that Washington, the Capital of our country, was like the hub of a great wheel, and all the spokes were telegraph lines leading to it, and everything that the Government had anything to do with was telegraphed instantly to Washington by its agents stationed all over the country. All matters relating to Indians were attended to by the Indian Office. Everything about public lands, public timber, mineral lands, railroads and railroad surveys was looked after by the General Land Office, and all business, such as collection of the internal-revenue tax, colection of taxes or duties on things brought to this country by ships, and the paying out of all money for improving rivers and harbors, building Government post-offices, court-houses, custom-houses and Government hospitals—all

this sort of business was attended to by the Treasury Department.

Ned's life in Washington and his experience as a page boy in the House of Representatives had given him unusual opportunities for seeing and knowing how a great nation was run. He knew that the House of Representatives and Senate, jointly called Congress, enacted laws governing the business of the United States. That the President completed the laws by signing his name to them; that Congress parceled out every year the money to carry on the nation's business by acts known as the annual appropriation bills. He explained to Harry that all its business was conducted by the several offices called the Interior, State, War, Navy, Treasury, Post-Office, and Agricultural Departments in Washington, and that these Departments commissioned men to act for them in every part of the country.

"We,—you and I,—are agents for the Government now, Harry," said he, "and I'll tell you how it is. Away out here is lots of wild country that the United States have bought for the people from the Indians. Lots of it the whites know nothing about, for the Indians have been living on it and haven't allowed the whites to go into it. After the Government has bought it Congress passes a bill or law giving the Interior Department many thousands of dollars to survey their new country so that they can have a map of it and know exactly how much land they've got, how much valuable timber there is on it, all about its rivers and lakes, its mineral resources and its geology—that is, all about the gold, silver and

copper, coal, and other valuable things there are in the ground and rock. Then the Director of the United States Geological Survey, whose office is in Washington, appoints topog-aphers or map makers, geologists, naturalists, and other scientific men to go to the new country and make a map of it and examine everything carefully; then they go back to Washington and write what they call reports, which have pictures and maps in them. They hand these to the Director of the Geological Survey and he sends them to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior forwards them to the President, and the President then sends them to Congress. Congress sends them to the Government Printing Office, a great factory for printing books, where hundreds of men are employed setting type and running great printing presses and book-binding machines. Here the reports are printed, and they are sent to all the libraries in the country and to anybody who applies for them. Everybody who wants to can read them and learn all about their new country.

"So you see, Harry, you are hired by the chief of the Survey to go with these scientific men and shoot deer, antelope and other game for them to live on while they are exploring the country, and I am hired to do whatever I can to help them, and am called a 'general assistant.' Professor Archer, though, has promised to let me carry a barometer and measure the heights of the mountains above sea level—won't that be fun, though, Harry?"

But Harry was not jubilant at the prospect of Ned being placed where he could not be with him. He had become warmly attached to the boy, and

had counted on having him with him on his hunting trips, and if Ned was to be made one of the scientific corps he probably wouldn't be able to accompany him, for Harry's duties would take him into the valleys rather than on the mountains.

This had not occurred to Ned before, and he, too, felt rather despondent at his proposed "promotion," if such it might be called.

Harry suddenly reined in Texas and was on the ground in a second scrambling around on his hands and knees.

"I've got him," he said as he arose.

"What is it, Harry?"

"A young gopher; ever see one, Ned?" Ned had not, and Harry handed it to him. It was a tiny little animal shaped somewhat like a ground squirrel, but with the softest and most beautifully spotted skin. It seemed not to be frightened, and made no attempt to escape from his hands.

"He'll be as tame as a kitten in two or three days," said Harry. "Put him in your pocket." But Ned preferred to carry his pet in his hands for some time. Finally he put it in his side coat pocket, and the little fellow curled up as contentedly as though he had always lived there.

Ned had often read of prairie dogs, owls, and rattlesnakes inhabiting the same burrow, and he was on the lookout whenever they passed a dog village to see a rattlesnake, but he was disappointed. Nothing escaped his eyes, however, for all was new and interesting to him. He saw the prickly globe cactus all over the prairie. In places it grew so thickly over the ground that it was impossible for his horse to put his foot down with-

out trampling upon it. (The globe cactus derives its name from its shape, though generally but half the sphere is visible above ground.) These globes were all sizes, from that of a walnut to eight or ten inches in diameter, and he found afterwards that the horses and pack animals frequently suffered from ankles made sore by marching over acres of this thorny plant. Ned saw little in the way of vegetation on the prairies aside from cacti and sagebrush; the latter a tough, poverty-stricken looking little bush, was everywhere, and as they rode along sage hens innumerable flew with a loud whir in every direction. Thousands upon thousands of these birds were to be seen in a short journey over the plains.

"Aren't sage hens good to eat, Harry?" asked Ned.

"Yes; but they have to be cooked by some one who knows how to cook 'em. The meat is dry 'less it's biled or cooked in water, and it ain't got much taste 'less ye put a little wild sage in as ye bile it. It's 'stonishin' how a little sage'll help ter flavor it up."

"I should think they'd live on them in camp, there are so many of them."

"We have had 'em lots until about the time you came here, Ned. The fellows get awfully tired of 'em, though, so I ain't shot any lately."

A rise in the prairie now brought them in sight of Camp Cottonwood, and soon they had unpacked their game and Ned was receiving the congratulations of everybody. He took the gopher from his pocket and put it on the ground, expecting it to scamper off immediately, but the little thing

ran aimlessly around as though loath to leave. Ned fed him some scraps from the table and, after he had eaten his fill, he tucked him in among the folds of a blanket and the little fellow went to sleep as contentedly as though he had always been used to this sort of thing.

CHAPTER VII.

The hunters found everyone in camp unusually good humored, for word had been received from Washington for the "Middle Park Division" to make immediate preparation to go into the field. Provisions had all been supplied, mules and horses, purchased through Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas, were in the corral waiting to be broken in to their new work, and the snow on the mountain passes would soon be melted enough to allow the party to cross the Great Divide.

"Why do they call the Snowy Range the Great Divide, Mr. Todd?" asked Ned as they sat around the fire that night.

"Because it divides the drainage of the country between the Atlantic and Pacific," replied the topographer; "that is, it separates the streams whose waters finally find their way into the two oceans so widely separated here. All the water that comes from the melting snows on this slope of that great range of mountains we can see from camp here drips down among the rocks, forming little icy rills. These rills, reinforced by hun-

The pack-saddle flew through the air.

dreds of springs on the mountain sides, soon develop into brooks and from brooks into rivers, and these rivers flow into the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean. On the opposite side all streams find their way into the Gulf of California and the Pacific."

"How far is it to Longs Peak from this camp?" Ned asked.

"About sixty-five miles, I think." The boy was astonished.

"Why, it doesn't look ten miles from here, Mr. Todd."

"No, distances, as you will find, boy, are exceedingly deceptive in this clear atmosphere. You will find many times that the hills you are riding toward look just as far away in the evening as they did when you started in the morning. Like will-o'-the-wisps, you seem never to reach them."

"And mind, Ned," said Lieutenant Barrington, "don't allow yourself to be deceived, as the Englishman was, out here on the plains. He'd been about Denver here hunting jack rabbits for several days, and one morning, starting out after breakfast, thought he'd walk over to the foothills, kill a deer, and get back in time for dinner. After walking six or eight miles he gave it up in disgust. He hadn't seemed to get a foot nearer those deceitful foothills. Again he thought of going over to Longs Peak to spend the day, but was told that it was over sixty miles to the peak. He would travel an hour trying to reach a lake that looked to be but a mile ahead, and finally have to give it up and return to camp tired out and thirsty.

"One day Bill Kingsley, of Fisher's ranch, took him out to shoot antelope. They'd been tramping around on the prairie an hour or so, Bill on foot, the Englishman following, when they came to one of the three-foot irrigation ditches that supplied the ranch with water. Bill stepped over it and walked on. He'd gone but a little distance when he missed the Englishman's step, and turning, saw him away back the other side of that ditch. He was sitting flat on the prairie pulling off his shoes and stockings. What the trouble was Bill couldn't make out. Then the Englishman deliberately rolled his trousers up above his knees. Bill grew curious.

" 'Say you, there, Tommy, why in thunder don't you come on?'

" 'I'm getting ready, don't y' know, my deah boy, to wade over this blawsted thing,' replied Tommy.

" 'Wade it! Wade what? Why the devil don't you step over it and come on?'

" 'My deah boy, y' cawn't fool me, don't y' know. I'm getting to know your blawsted country, and this bloomin' stream may be a mile wide for all I know.' "

"That Englishman," said Brady, "wasn't as bad as the tenderfoot from Maine who came out here hunting buffalo last fall. He'd been often fooled, too. He tried to step across Platte river, thinking it was an irrigation ditch and was nearly drowned. Then he discovered a herd of buffalo one morning on the foothills and, after banging away half a day until his ammunition ran out, started to climb the hills to skin his game, and

found he'd killed half a village of prairie dogs not a hundred yards in front of him on the prairie."

"Say, fellers," chimed in Shep, "did you ever hear o' the tenderfoot as come out hyar and tramped over the sagebrush all day follerin' two black-tail deer and about sunset found he'd been follerin' two fly specks on his spectacles?"

"Now, Bill," said Professor Archer, "you've got to beat Shep's story or sing us a song before we go to bed." Bill's forte was singing, not story-telling, so at last he yielded and Camp Cottonwood's outfit was treated to one of the choicest numbers of his repertoire:

"Thar lived in the town o' Kalamazoo,—
Of Kalamazoo so fair,—
A lass with eyes of tender blue
An' a foot the shape of an army shoe,
A lass with yaller hair.

"This lass had a lover, a feller named Mose,
A soldier boy was he.
He had bow legs and a wart on his nose,
He had cross eyes and corns on his toes,
This fellar named Mose, had he.

"He had a harelip and he'd lost an ear
In a scrap with a bear one night.
His neck it was bent in a way that was queer,
He was bony and thin as a Texas steer,
And he'd lost his front teeth in a fight.

"One day, as I'm told, in Kalamazoo,—
In Kalamazoo, Mich-i-gan,—
Mose stopped the town clock by lookin' at it,
Then his yaller-haired lass she gave him the mit,
And she married a handsomer man."

With the conclusion of Bill's song, lights were put out, all crawled into their little fly tents and Camp Cottonwood soon slumbered.

From the camp-fire talks Ned had gathered the information that there would be exciting times in Camp Cottonwood when the new mules were brought from the corral to receive their first introduction to the pack saddle, and the next morning he was up early, accompanying Harry, Bill Slade, Shep Medway, Jack Sargent, and Bob White to the corral a few hundred yards up Clear Creek.

The corral was rectangular in shape, a lot of sheds on one side, the other three sides enclosed with a stockade of poles about eight feet high. Ned climbed onto a shed and located himself where he could watch proceedings with safety. Shep and Bill carried long lariats with slip nooses at the ends. These they coiled carefully and then, separating, picked out the animal they wanted.

"Now, go for him, boys," and the three lassoes whizzed through the air. One fell short, but the other two swished over the head of a big black mule's head and tightened quickly around his neck. There was a general stampede of the animals to the opposite side of the corral. The captured mule kicked and plunged wildly in his efforts to free his neck from the lassoes, but while Shep and Bill clung to their ropes Bob slipped up and soon had a halter on the frightened animal. This done, the lassoes were removed and the mule led from the corral without further trouble. This performance was repeated, but with varying success until a dozen mules were captured. Some-

times the ropes would miss their mark, fall among the mules, and one would get his leg into the noose. The more the animal struggled, of course, the tighter the noose would draw, and often the frightened beast would be thrown violently to the ground, and it was troublesome and dangerous work for the men to release the struggling legs of the victim.

Several wild-looking bronchos were now roped in and bridled. Then, with the assistance of Harry, Ned, and several packers from camp, the animals were led over to camp and tied to the cottonwoods.

The great thick leather bags or pack saddles, called aparajoes (pronounced ap-ar-a-hoe), that Ned had seen in camp standing in a long row like so many small tents were now to play their part. These aparajoes were made of thick sole leather like a mattress, stuffed with hay until they were about eight inches thick. This mattress was in the form of an inverted capital letter V, two feet and a half wide and two feet high. They were provided with great strong iron rings and horsehair girths, or cinchos, six inches broad and half an inch thick, and numerous stout leather straps.

Bill led Balaam, a large gray mule, up to receive his introduction to the aparajoe. A leather blind about eight inches wide was placed over his head and down over his eyes. A packer on either side held onto his halter, carefully keeping at arm's length from the mule. Then another packer placed two thick gray folded blankets over his back. An aparajoe was now lifted up and set

gently upon the blankets. Balaam gave a slight jump as the weight fell upon him. His ears were thrown back and he showed that a storm was brewing. The horsehair cincho was loosely drawn together and a few straps partially buckled up, then a broad, wadded breastband was buckled in front. A similar breeching strap was brought around under the animal's tail and buckled up. Balaam grew decidedly restless as this strange performance progressed. All straps and girths were now tightened by degrees except the breech strap, until the aparajoe was pretty well set. Then Shep gave the word:

"Now watch yer eyes, fellers," with which he gave the breech strap a quick jerk, buckling it up tightly around Balaam's haunches. For a moment the mule stood in a slightly squatting position. Then there broke forth a series of gymnastics that threatened the life and limbs of all Camp Cottonwood. Balaam kicked and reared, plunged and cavorted. The two packers held firmly to the halter, but were led a lively dance to keep from beneath the animal's feet. Vainly the mule tried to throw the strange burden off his back by jumping and roaching his spine like a bow. Then he would try to lie down, but this attempt was met with the sting of a whiplash. Camp Cottonwood resounded for five minutes at least with cracking heels and wild snorts. Occasionally there was a let-up for a few seconds as the animal became almost exhausted. During these lulls the packers would spring quickly and tighten still more the straps and breeching. The great horsehair cincho or girth under the animal's belly was now drawn

so tight that Ned thought the animal would be cut in half. Soon the beast's plunges became less vigorous and he groaned woefully. Ned's young heart suffered. He thought the poor mule would die.

"He'll git over that soon; he's got the colic; that's one o' them evils o' tight lacin' they talk about," exclaimed Jack Sargent.

"But why do they girth them up so tightly?" asked Ned.

"Because, boy, if they didn't, them mules wouldn't last three days. With a pack on that saddle weighin' a hundred and seventy-five pounds their backs would be rubbed raw in half an hour if the aparajoe moved an inch while on the march. Packin' always gives the mules colic till they're used to it."

After Balaam had been led about camp for a few minutes with his aparajoe, two packing boxes filled with cooking utensils, rolls of tents, and other articles were now placed on each side, secured by a wonderful array of ropes drawn tightly around the pack and aparajoe through iron rings. When the entire pack was fixed in position a large canvas was thrown over it and fastened with what the expert packers called the "diamond hitch"—from the fact that the outside ropes crossed the whole pack, forming a diamond on each side.

With his pack still on, Balaam was now tied to a tree, and the other mules one by one taken through the same drilling. Some of them submitted to the treatment with less opposition than others, of course, for mule nature is like human

nature; and there are human beings who do a lot more kicking than others.

It was dinner time before all the mules had received their initiation as pack animals, and when they were again turned loose into the corral they stood sullenly around for a time and then one by one they laid down upon the ground, most of them still groaning with colic.

CHAPTER VIII.

Camp Cottonwood was now very picturesque with its white tents scattered among the trees, rows of pack saddles, piles of mess chests and blankets, boxes of surveying instruments, guns and saddles scattered about, and a scraggy broncho saddled and picketed here and there through the grove, ready for duty. Dinner was usually announced by George, the cook, in tones that reverberated among the huge cottonwoods like a steam calliope.

There was not much class distinction at Camp Cottonwood. Scientist and mule whacker sat side by side around the dry goods box table. When there was a demand for bread from Professor Archer at the end of the table a biscuit was unceremoniously tossed him by Bill Slade at the other end and was deftly caught by the Professor.

Every man helped himself to anything within reach and left his neighbor to do likewise. There was little to distinguish the naturalist from the packer, or the hunter from the geologist, so far as dress was concerned. All wore old clothes

Thousands of magpies flew to and fro.

patched and reinforced with buckskin. A packer might wear knee-high boots, while a topographer or civil engineer affected the more comfortable moccasins and leggins of buckskin.

After dinner several of the ponies brought from the corral were brought out to undergo a test as to their fitness for riding animals. They had been purchased wherever they could be had through the Western States and Territories, and often animals of the herd were found entirely unfit to start into the field, owing to their propensity to "buck," a habit of which they are seldom broken, or for other viciousness.

One of the packers saddled and mounted a ragged, demure looking little broncho who looked as though he might fall asleep at any moment But scarcely was the rider seated in the saddle when he was landed head first into a clump of bushes. One after another tried to ride the broncho, but all met with dismal failure. Jack Sargent stuck to the saddle longer than any of the others, but the pony would repeatedly arch his back, spring from the ground, and come down with legs stiffened straight out, jarring the rider from center to circumference. It was in vain that Jack dug the rowels of his great Mexican spurs into the animal's sides and lashed him with the "quirt," or whip—the ugly little fellow was not to be subdued, and Jack finally dismounted simply to avoid being shaken to pieces. All the ponies of the herd were tried under the saddle and those proving to be good saddle animals were selected by the latest arrivals at Camp Cottonwood.

A week was spent in drilling the pack mules and ponies to their duties, and Ned soon became accustomed to the distressing groaning and grunting of the mules after receiving their packs. He was particularly interested when the animals were drilled into following the bell mare. The mare was provided with a broad leather collar and a large cow bell. The bell mare was the cook's saddle animal, and after a few short trips out on the prairie, the cook riding ahead and the hoarse cow bell clanking its harsh notes at every step of the mare, the mules soon learned to follow her, single file, and behave as well-regulated pack mules should. These short marches were Ned's delight, and riding alongside the slow-moving pack train or taking a brisk gallop off to one side across the plains on his horse Buckskin he soon became an expert rider, and with his lasso could single out any animal in the train and cast the noose gracefully over its head, a worthy pupil of the ancient and honorable William Slade.

The coarse clothing that Ned had been advised to provide himself with before leaving Washington was still too fragile for this rough and tumble camp life, and Harry assisted him in reinforcing the knees and seat of his trousers and the elbows of his coat with buckskin in true frontier style. Harry cut the buckskin to the proper form and sewed it tightly onto the clothing with the coarsest of hemp thread, and finally gave an artistic touch to the job by adding a row of buckskin fringe down the seams of the boy's coat sleeves and trouser legs. Professor Archer brought him a pair of large roweled Mexican spurs from Den-

ver one day, and Professor Brady presented him with a fine horsehair lariat. Ned was fast assuming the appearance of a true son of the Western wilds, and when Harry completed his accouterment by presenting him with a beautifully beaded belt and knife sheath made by the Sioux Indians up in the Big Horn country, Ned felt himself a full-fledged member of Camp Cottonwood's outfit.

He was rapidly becoming naturalist, geologist, topographer, mineralogist, and artist under the tutorage of Professor Archer, Professor Brady, Mr. Todd, Mr, Negley, and Lieutenant Barrington, and he soon added to his outfit a hammer for cracking geological and mineral specimens, a wide-mouthed bottle filled with alcohol for the collection of bugs and reptiles, and sketchbook and pencils. The hammer and bottle he carried in his saddle pockets and the sketching materials were encased in a buckskin bag, which was slung over his back with a stout strap. Under Mr. Negley's instruction Ned soon acquired much skill in sketching from nature, and all his letters home were illustrated with pictures of bronchos, pack mules, packers, and other features of camp life. He rendered Lieutenant Barrington no little assistance in preparing his collection of bird skins for future mounting, and was always on the alert, when riding out, to secure any rare bird or bug that he encountered. He knew the names of most of the birds inhabiting the cottonwood grove about camp, and called Lieutenant Barrington's attention to a fact that the naturalist had never before noticed.

"Mr. Barrington, did you ever notice that some

of these little yellow and green birds that we see in the grove here sing something that sounds like an old song that everybody knows?"

"I hadn't noticed it, Ned; but let's listen."

In a minute came the clear bell-like notes from a tree above them. "There it is now; what does it sound like to you?" asked Ned.

"Well, it's 'Annie Laurie,' sure as you are born, Ned," replied the Lieutenant.

"That's it," said Ned, "it begins exactly like 'Annie Laurie.'"

"That, Ned, is the song of the Louisiana tanager," explained the Lieutenant, "but it never before occurred to me that its first few notes were those of that old-time song. Now, Ned, always be on the lookout and clap into your bottle any strange bug or beetle that you may find and bring them to me. You are as likely to run across good specimens as I am, but be very careful what you undertake to catch. There are some very large spiders on these plains, known as tarantulas, and they have a deadly, poisonous bite. Be careful, if you find one, to handle him with long sticks until you land him safely in your bottle."

Ned, in turn, pressed all the packers into his service and got a promise from each one to let him know if they ran across a tarantula or other good specimen for his bottle.

Now it happened one evening at the camp-fire talk the topographers or map-makers got to discussing their plan of operations, the first step of which was the primary triangulation of the territory they were to make a map of. By triangulation is meant the running of imaginary lines, by

the aid of the surveying instruments, called base lines from point to point, forming triangles. From these imaginary lines or triangles they carry on their topographical work. The packers, of course, heard many professional terms used without getting their meaning exactly clear in their minds.

The next day after the triangulation of the Middle Park had been talked over, some of the packers had occasion to ride into Denver, and as usual Ned went too. Shep Medway was some distance ahead when the others saw him suddenly rein in his broncho. Then his hand was waved aloft and he was intently eyeing the ground in front of him. His voice was now plainly heard calling to them to hurry up.

"I say, you, Ned, come along hyar, quick; here's one o' yer darned trianguluses now."

In poor Shep's mind some analogy existed between the tarantula that Ned wanted to catch and the triangulation he had heard Mr. Todd talk about,—but just which one of these bugs he had found crawling over the prairie he didn't know.

The inhabitants of Camp Cottonwood had become restless. They wanted to get into the field and commence active operations and hoped from day to day to hear from Washington. Everything was ready and all wished heartily for orders to break camp and start into the mountains. The chests were fully stocked with provisions, the mules fairly used to their new work, all individual outfitting done by the party, and now they wanted to move. None were more anxious to start than Ned. He had gazed often and long at the long

wall of dark hills which stretched out north and south as far as he could see. Beyond arose the spotless summit of the Snowy Range, apparently but a few miles away in the rarefied atmosphere of Colorado, with ever and anon a giant peak lifting its cap of eternal snow far into the clouds. He had been several weeks now within a day's march of the Rocky Mountains, and had day by day watched the sun light up the great fields of distant snow with ever changing color. He had seen the sun go down and its departing rays transform Longs Peak into glistening mother-of-pearl and shell-like pink, and he had heard the cry of long-billed curlews as they flew across the western twilight sky, and ever, as the shadows of evening darkened, he felt a heartsick longing to leave Camp Cottonwood and explore the mysteries of the Great Divide. He awoke one morning to the monotonous call of the cook.

"Roll out, roll out, breck-fuss!" And as he arose and dressed he grew suddenly so homesick that his heart was in his mouth, and when he went down to Clear Creek to wash his face the song of the tanagers in the cottonwoods almost brought tears to his eyes. He sat on a fallen tree and smoothed his hair with the aid of a comb and small lookingglass his mother had given him. Then he heard the sound of hoofs on the prairie, and looking up saw a stranger ride into camp and inquire for Professor Archer. Ned saw the chief emerge from his tent and take an envelope from the hands of the horseman. Professor Archer tore open the envelope and glanced at the sheet of paper it contained.

Through dark and gloomy cañons.

"Good," he almost yelled. "Boys, we are to move immediately; here's a dispatch from Dr. Hayden at Washington, telling me to get into the field with my party at once." Then it was that three hearty cheers went up from Camp Cottonwood.

Everybody in the outfit was busy that day, and at night all were willing to leave the camp fire early and retire to their tents. Ned lay flat on his stomach that night in his tent, and, with a candle stuck into a bottle for light, and his saddle for a writing desk, wrote a long letter to his people at home in the far away East. Several times, while writing, he was obliged to brush aside his pet gopher, now as tame as a kitten, which persisted in trying to crawl down the back of his neck in search of a comfortable sleeping place.

Ned described with all the enthusiasm of youth everything that had happened in and about Camp Cottonwood since his last letter and told his mother that when he next wrote he could, like one of the generals of the War of the Rebellion, date his letter from "Headquarters in the saddle."

CHAPTER IX.

"Roll out, roll out, breck-fuss!"

Ned was fast asleep, but the cook's familiar call, though two hours earlier than usual, awoke him next morning and he needed no second call. He jumped into his clothes in half the usual time and

was soon at the corral assisting the packers to bring over the animals. Everybody was in a good humor and Bill's five-fathom voice could be heard far up and down Clear Creek.

"Hank Johnsing he worked a-siftin' of the dust,
'Way down nigh the town o' Sutterville,
And ef he ain't got rich or ef he ain't got bust,
Why, I reckon he's a-workin' thar still."

This time it was no dress rehearsal for the pack mules, but the beginning of real toil and trouble for the poor brutes. They did not stand the packing ordeal as well as usual, for they did not understand or like this early morning intrusion. It was hard work for both mules and packers, this breaking camp. It was long after daylight before everything was ready. The mules' halters were thrown over their necks, tied loosely, and the animals turned loose. Then the cook mounted the bell mare and splashed into Clear Creek. With great difficulty and much profanity on the part of their packers the mules were headed after her. It required the utmost alertness and skill for the men to keep the poor beasts from lying down in the water with their packs. It was nearly half an hour before the whole cavalcade was on the north bank of the creek. The united efforts of all hands was now necessary to keep the mules from stampeding. They were all stirred up by the unusual hurry and confusion of breaking camp and were thoroughly frightened when forced into the creek with their great packs. For the time being they forgot the training they had been through, and

the more the packers swore and lashed them with their stinging lariats, the more stubborn and unruly grew the mules. Then Zell made a dash up the creek. Two exasperated packers dug their spurs into their bronchos' sides and sped swiftly after her. Another mule rebelled and started straight in the opposite direction, with three horsemen in close pursuit, their swear words chasing each other swiftly through the air. The cook looked back and saw there was trouble. Then he reined in his mare and stopped—the worst thing he could have done—for the bell had hardly ceased its hoarse clanking when there was a general rush of the pack animals in all directions. Without the familiar sound of the bell they were like an army deprived of their leader. A wild scene followed. Bronchos were lashed and spurred to their utmost and every man of the party became for the time being a mule whacker. The thud of hoofs on the prairie sounded like a cavalry charge. One mule's pack became loosened and slid to one side. The frightened animal jumped to one side. Then the whole pack turned over and hung beneath her legs. She kicked and plunged terrifically, vainly trying to tear loose from the myriad of straps and ropes that encircled her. Time and again her feet caught in the dangling pack and she fell to the ground, but this only terrified the poor thing all the more and her efforts grew desperate. Three or four of the party, seeing the condition of things, abandoned the chase after the others, and jumped to the ground and surrounded the terror-stricken creature. Swish! went a lasso, but it missed its mark. Swish! another, but it fell short.

Here Bob White came dashing up on his wild-eyed mustang.

"Whoop, thar, ye d——!!!——!!——!" and the air was fairly blue. The mule had now kicked itself loose from the whole pack and had started like the wind across the prairie, Bob after her pell-mell. Then something shot through the air and at the same time Bob's mustang suddenly stopped and threw himself back on his haunches. The runaway mule was jerked back with such force as to throw her to the ground with great force. The lasso had encircled her neck. She struggled to arise, but no use. Bob's pony understood thoroughly what was expected of it, and the more the mule struggled the tighter the pony drew upon the lasso which Bob had quickly wound about the big pommel of his Mexican saddle. A dozen hands were now upon the mule and it was soon a prisoner.

A whole hour was thus consumed capturing the mutinous animals, picking up the scattered contents of the wrecked pack, and getting things in shipshape again.

George remounted the bell mare and the monotonous "clank! clank!" told that the head of the procession was moving.

Hard work and constant alertness on the part of all hands were required now to keep the mules within bounds. They appeared to have lost in an hour all the fruits of the training they had received for a week.

"They'll git all right in a couple o' days," said Bob, "and in less'n a week they'll be droppin' inter their places."

"What do you mean by dropping into their places?" asked Ned.

"Why, they'll begin ter go Injun like—single file, and every mule will have her place in the line an' she'll keep it if she has ter fight for it."

"Clank! clank! clank!" the musical jingle of the little steel pendants, called bells, against the great rowels of the Mexican spurs kept time to the step of the riding animals for hour after hour. There was little change in the scenery. The mountains looked just about as far off as they had in the early morning, the foreground was the same monotonous stretch of sagebrush intermingled with globe cactus. Prairie dog villages were everywhere and the frisky little animals could be seen by hundreds darting here and there, barking excitedly at the army of strange beings approaching their habitations.

Ned felt exuberant. At last he was approaching the great Rocky Mountains that he had heard of since his earliest recollections. Here they were looming up before him in reality, and in a short while he would be climbing their snowy sides. How tremendously grand they looked towering away up there far, far above the fleecy clouds, and how clear and crisp their outlines were against the blue sky. They looked cold even at this distance. Their white covering was spotted in places, showing where the winds had blown the snow from some great rocky projection or where the snow in some particularly sheltered place had melted and left the mountain bare.

Could it be possible, thought Ned, that Longs Peak—that magnificent mountain that rose above

all its fellows—was yet half a hundred miles off? And yet it seemed to him that if a man were on the snowy summit now he could almost see him with the naked eye. A few weeks later Ned learned a great deal more about Longs Peak.

The greater part of the morning and afternoon the train moved parallel with the mountains. About noon a two hours' stop for dinner was made and the packs removed from the mules. Poor beasts, they were receiving their "baptism of fire" and for half an hour after they were relieved of their burdens they groaned with colic. Before Ned had been in the field a week he noticed that the colic produced in the pack animals after their burdens were removed was more severe and lasted longer than that given them by their first tight lacing in the morning.

The mules all had names given them by the packers. There was Zell, and Dick, and Dolly, and Balaam, and Sarah Ann, and Phoebe Jane, and Mose, and Comanche, and Jehoshaphat. This strange life was so new to Ned that he took the liveliest interest in everything. He watched the animals closely and soon found they had individual peculiarities just as he had noticed individual peculiarity in the manner in which Congressmen called the page boys. He was particularly struck with Zell. Zell had not been on the march two hours before she developed a trick to rest her back from the great weight she was carrying. She would walk rapidly forward until she came to a little hillock or rise in the ground. Then she would plant her forefeet firmly against this, stretch her hind feet out far behind and remain in

this position until the last pack animal had passed. She would then join the procession apparently relieved.

Later in the afternoon, by order of Professor Archer, the party headed directly west. Then Ned realized that he would soon be among the "foothills"—those pigmies who seemed to stand guard at the Giant's gate. As evening approached the air was filled with the lonesome cry of long-billed curlews as they flew across the golden sky. The air grew cool and crisp and Ned grew hungry. He began to feel that his first day's march had tired him considerably. But he was full of enthusiasm. And when orders were given to halt on the prairie and make camp upon the banks of a stream too small to have any excuse for existence at all, he unsaddled his horse, brushed him down and bustled about, lending a hand here and there, and making himself generally useful. He set his own little fly tent up and then set up Professor Archer's and Harry's while the latter was feeding his horses. Then he brought two or three pails of water for George, the cook, for all were hungry and there were many to cook for.

The packs were systematically arranged upon the ground in a row and each aparajoe placed beside the pack which it had been carrying, and the whole covered with an aparajoe blanket. The mules were picketed in a circle about camp, the twenty-foot lariat of each allowing the animals ample freedom for browsing. These lariats were secured to iron picket pins an inch in diameter and eighteen inches long, sharp at one end and with a large ring in the other. The pins were

driven into the ground with a blow or two from the back of an ax.

It seemed an age to Ned before the cook's welcome call of supper came. All scrambled to the oilcloth spread upon the ground and seated themselves around it. It was a jolly supper in spite of the fact that all hands were tired, and good-natured jokes and badinage prevailed.

While pitching camp Ned noticed on the prairie nearby a plank structure about fifteen feet high, ten feet square at the base, and tapering to a point at the top. The lower part was painted white and the top black. Professor Archer explained to Ned that for the past three or four weeks he had had men from Denver building these pyramids on the plains at stated points. They were to be used by the party in the "primary triangulation" of the survey. In other words, he said, these structures were what were called "stations." They were to be sighted at from the mountains through the surveying instruments in running the imaginary lines for the survey called base lines. These "stations" were to form one corner of a giant imaginary triangle, and this triangle was then to be filled in with smaller triangles, and these in turn with all the mountains and valleys —or elevations and depressions, the topographers call them—the rivers, creeks and lakes. In the mountains certain well-defined peaks could be used, but there was nothing on the prairie, so these points of sight had to be provided. Ned had always liked geography better than any of his studies at school, and yet, as much as he had pored over the maps of his atlas, he had but the

vaguest idea of how they were produced. He knew the men who made the maps must have known in what direction all the rivers ran and where the mountain ranges were, and all that, but now he was beginning to understand that map making was a great and beautiful art. He exhibited such interest in the plank pyramid looming up here on the prairie, that Mr. Todd promised to explain the process as well as he could when they got fairly to work.

All gathered around a huge camp fire that night and watched the tongues of flame lick the chilly air. Bill Slade lay flat on his back, his clasped hands forming a head rest, while he puffed dreamily at his stub of a pipe. He seemed to be in a reminiscent mood. When the last bit of tobacco had gone up in smoke, he thrust his pipe into his pocket and began to sing loud enough to be heard in Montana.

"An angel is Jerushy Ann,
She lives in Ohi-o;
I love that gal as hard as I can,
She is my gal and I'm her man,
Oh, I'm Jerushy's beau.

"An angel is Jerushy Ann,
She lives in Ohi-o.
I used to take that gal to school
In a sleigh behind a big gray mule,
In the winter long ago.

"An angel is Jerushy Ann,
She lives in Ohi-o.
That mule belonged to her pawpaw,
'Twas the homeliest mule I ever saw,
As over the snow we went.

"An angel is Jerushy Ann,
She lives in Ohi-o.
She writ me a letter an' said that she
Never saw that mule without thinkin' o' me.
I wonder what she meant?"

CHAPTER X.

During the night Harry went to Ned's tent and aroused the boy from a sound slumber. He arose quickly and, while rubbing his sleepy eyes, heard a chorus of the most dismal howls.

"Wolves," explained Harry. "Git yer gun, boy, and try yer hand at shootin' in the dark."

Brady and Shep were also up with their guns.

"Not much hope of a night's rest with those howling beasts around," said Brady, "but it's a waste of ammunition to shoot. We might kill half the pack and the others would hang around until daylight."

"Try 'em, anyway, Ned," said the hunter. "Git out a little ways and ye can see their eyes."

Ned hesitated a little about venturing out toward the howling, snapping things, but Harry assured him there was no danger.

"They're a cowardly set, an' ye needn't be afeered. Ye couldn't overtake 'em on Tex if ye'd try."

Ned and Harry blazed away with their rifles half a dozen times each at the phosphorescent balls that dodged here and there out in the blackness. With each shot a chorus of yells and howls enough to make the blood run cold would go up

A midsummer day's march.

from the entire pack. Then, for two or three minutes only, would the shining eyes disappear.

Brady and Shep had gone to their tents again, and finally Harry and Ned retired also, but it was nearly morning before Ned closed his eyes in sleep.

The cook's call of "Roll out, roll out, breckfuss!" brought Ned to his feet, and in a few minutes he was dressed and out looking for the wolves that he thought he and Harry must have killed during the night. Not a carcass was to be seen.

"You'd find some of 'em ef ye'd hunt far enough out, Ned," said the hunter. "Some of them kyotes never went off with the pack, sartin." But there was no time for wolf hunting now, for the packers would be waiting for the tents.

Breakfast was finished without delay, and Ned had his own tent down and neatly rolled about the poles in a few minutes after, and then assisted Mr. Todd and Lieutenant Barrington with theirs. Ned had learned in Camp Cottonwood that system was always to be observed in making and breaking camp, so as to avoid delaying the packers. The last pack on was the one containing the cooking utensils. This was necessary, as the cook had to wash the tin dishes, iron knives, forks and spoons, and clean all his pots and kettles after the men had finished breakfast. All the articles of this pack were packed in three mess chests, except the large pots, pans, and kettles. These were tied to the pack outside the canvas covering.

Less trouble was experienced by the packers with the mules than on the previous morning, and the train started very early. The party moved northwest, parallel with the foothills. Upon first starting there was considerable galloping up and down among the whackers, and many unrefined expressions used to get the mules into single file. They were inclined to "bunch" and keep together. The poor animals seemed to want the company of their fellows in misery. But this was against the whackers' rules, which required the mules to go in single file, so that when marching in the mountains, over trails and passes where it was impossible to go any other way, there would be no friction.

A few minutes after starting, Shep, who was in advance, halted and called back to Ned:

"Hi, thar, Ned. Hyar's yer game now"—pointing to the ground. Then he rode ahead.

When Ned came up to where Shep pointed he saw the dead body of a wolf, mangled and bleeding, among the sagebrush. A quarter of a mile further on another one was passed. There was no doubt these were wolves killed by Ned and the hunter during the night. Why were they not nearer camp? Had they been only wounded, and had they dragged themselves this far? No. Ned and Harry examined both carcasses. The one nearest camp had been shot through the body, and the one farther on had been shot squarely through the head. It would have been impossible for the wolf to have gone ten steps with such a wound. He must have been dragged this far by his brother wolves.

The old hunter told Ned that this was a common occurrence. He had known wolves shot at a camp at night in a way that must have instantly killed them to be found dead a mile from the camp, and he believed the other wolves dragged them off. He had never known them to eat their wounded fellows, though he had often heard this assertion made.

After two hours' marching, the mules settled down to a steady gait. They kept their places in line better than they had done the day before, and altogether things worked with greater system and satisfaction. General good spirits prevailed among the men, who were scattered along the line without regard to any regular order.

Every few minutes tiny white specks, moving, apparently, slowly up and down, could be seen on the prairie. These were the snowy tails of the prong horn, and the seemingly slow motion was in reality as swift as the wind, for they were always a long way off. Their sharp eyes had caught sight of the strange beings approaching them and they were off like arrows. Nothing but the swiftest greyhound could overtake them. Straight ahead of the train arose the ragged line of foothills. Towering above these were pine-clad mountains of pearly hue, across which fleecy clouds raced with their own shadows. These mountains dwindled into molehills at the feet of the giants beyond, that reared their snow-capped peaks high above clouds and storms. No Italian sky was ever bluer than that which canopied prairie and mountain. No arctic snow was ever whiter than that which crested Arapahoe,

Long, Lincoln, Gray, and Torry peaks that spring morning. Silken cacti bloom garnished the prairie with golden yellows and flaming reds, and acres of wild roses perfumed the air. Everything was strange, wild, picturesque, beautiful. Once witnessed, such a scene can never be recalled without filling one again with the peculiar exhilaration born amid the wild scenes and life-giving atmosphere of the great West. It was a glorious morning.

Barrington and Todd were skirmishing around over the prairie together, and the former could be seen occasionally jumping from his horse. He was clapping an ugly little red, horned frog, a villainous tarantula, and other specimens into his bottles.

Ned was beginning in earnest to feel the benefit of this free, outdoor life. Horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and sleeping in the open air had given him an appetite equal to that of the hardiest whacker in the outfit. His color was better, his eyes were brighter, and his spirits buoyant. He was enjoying an experience that would furnish him pleasant memories as long as he lived, although there was lots of hardship intermingled with it all, as he learned before he had been in the field long. Yet, what would life amount to if all was one round of uninterrupted pleasure. We would tire of it in a very short time. Ned soon found that, after a hard march through swamps and over great areas of fallen timber, where every step the horse took jarred and tired him unmercifully, his hot coffee in camp at night tasted better and his sleep was

more refreshing. Besides, Ned was perfectly willing at all times to take his share of work, as well as play, and this made for him many friends. There was not a man in the company who did not admire the boy for his good sense, energy, and pluck.

It was nearly noon when, the train reaching an elevation on the prairie, an emigrant outfit of five great canvas-covered wagons, a dozen horses, and half a dozen cows was discovered in camp a mile or so ahead. Professor Archer told the packers to head the train toward the camp.

"I see they have some cows; maybe we can get a drink of milk," said he.

The emigrants' camp was found pleasantly located on the bank of a good sized stream, and as the pack train approached it a score of dogs rushed out with a bedlam of barks and yelps. They were quickly kicked back and into silence, however, by their owners, and the party welcomed by many hearty "howdys" and invitations to "light and git a bite to eat."

"We've got to eat as we march to-day," answered Professor Archer, "but we'd like some milk if you've any to spare."

A dozen tin pails were instantly brought out and big tin cups of good fresh milk passed to all. It was a typical emigrant train, made up of that class of hardy pioneers who are never satisfied, always restless, always moving on—on—on to some place their imagination pictures better than their present abode. They were the sort of people who have always made up the advance guard of civilization in this country, however, and who

have ever performed well their mission of breaking the way for others to follow. They were people who could only be happy while on the frontier, preferring its hardships, its excitements, and its dangers to what they looked upon as the humdrum life of farming in a settled community.

There were women, children, dogs, sheep, cows, chickens, mattresses of bed ticking, old calico patchwork quilts, saddles, cooking utensils, guns, and bundles of every description scattered about in the greatest confusion. Men, women, and children wore the coarsest of homespun jeans, that of the men being generally of the butternut brown dye, while that worn by many of the females was of brighter colors woven in checks of various sizes. A few of the men and women wore shoes or moccasins, but a majority of the party was barefooted, and apparently they had not even forded a stream of water in many a day, to say nothing of giving their feet an honest and intentional scrubbing.

The pack train moved on, but Professor Archer, Lieutenant Barrington, Harry, and Ned remained to talk with the leaders of the pioneer party about reported prospects of trouble with the Indians, and to gather what information they might have. The emigrants had been told by a band of friendly Arapahoes they had fallen in with a few days before that the Utes felt very ugly toward the whites, and that twice raids had been made by White River Indians to the east of the mountains further north, where they had killed many head of cattle and had stolen many horses belonging on the frontier ranches.

One tall, slab-sided fellow with a thicket of scraggy red beard growing over his face, and a head of hair that had probably not had an encounter with a comb for weeks, stood listening to the conversation. His hat was a broad-rimmed, home-woven chip structure, frayed at the edges and full of holes. His shirt and pants were of blue jeans, and his wa'mus was of buckskin, fringed at the collar and shoulders. He carried an old-time Kentucky rifle as long as himself. He was thin and pale. He was soaked with Wabash ague. It seemed to ooze out of the pores of his skin. He was as sallow as a tallow candle. When Professor Archer said good-by this fellow pushed forward and inquired:

"Say, mister, what are this 'ere outfit, anyhow?"

"A surveying party," answered the Professor.

"Guv'ment outfit, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"What are yer prospectin' fur?"

"Well, we're after rocks and bones," replied the chief.

"Should think yer could git yer belly full o' rocks in no time up yander in them mountings, an' I didn't know the Guv'ment wuz runnin' a bone mill."

"Well, now, my friend, what are you prospecting for?" asked Barrington.

"Wa'll, I lived back thar in Injeanny, but I left them parts 'cause it got too crowded round whar I was."

"Had too many neighbors, I suppose?"

"Wa'll, sir, I didn't have right clost neighbors for a while, an' 'coons an' 'possums wuz a plenty,

an' a feller could git a good livin' 'thout half tryin'. But, then, a dad-ratted feller named Ely Whitcomb he come down thar from Elle-noy an' squatted hisself fur life not more'n seven mile up the river. Then he just sot hisself a killin' 'coon an' 'possum critters as ef he owned the hull diggins. An' he had nine dogs, an' blamed ef he'd give away a durned dog. Well, sir, I've a-knowd that feller ter kill seven 'coon critters in one night with them dogs o' hissen, while I'd tramp round them swamps all night an' never smell a 'coon. I just got disgusted an' left the blame kentry and come out ter Missoury."

"Live long in Missouri?" asked Professor Archer.

"Naw. I didn't live thar more'n two months. 'Twaun't half a kentry, that waun't. Why, blamed ef a feller'd git a 'coon a week in Missoury. That waun't no place to live in, so I just jined these 'ere folks an' come out hyar." Archer and Barrington smiled.

"Well, my friend," said the Professor, "I hope you'll have good luck here in this new country and get all the 'coon critters' you want," and as he turned to ride away the 'coon hunter called out:

"Say, mister, what's your name?"

"I'm Mr. Archer, of Washington."

"Well, say, mister, I'm Abe Hawkins, of Injeanny."

"I'm glad I met you, Mr. Hawkins."

"Oh, don't mention it. Good-by," and he walked away.

"There," observed Archer to Barrington, "is an object lesson showing that contentment is not

He hung to the projecting end of the pole.

monopolized by the lowly, as is the generally accepted theory. While the Vanderbilts, the Astors, and Goulds go elbowing through life struggling for more millions, here is 'Abe Hawkins, of Injeanny,' moving onward, onward, restlessly onward, toward the setting sun in search of a better 'coon country."

CHAPTER XI.

During the afternoon Ned amused himself shooting at jack rabbits from his horse. He had become quite proficient with his rifle, but he found shooting from horseback quite different from shooting from a terra firma stand. He fired probably half a dozen times at the great awkward jacks as they went over the prairie with their tremendous leaps before he succeeded in hitting one. Then in less than a dozen shots more he killed three. His improvement in shooting "on the wing" gave Harry as much pleasure as it did Ned.

"You're gettin' thar in good shape, boy. You'll soon beat your old teacher."

It was about sunset when the train reached the first of the foothills, where camp was made. The curiously shaped rocks have given to a similar locality further south the name of the Garden of the Gods. These queer rocks have been formed by the softer strata wearing away by the action of the weather, leaving the harder rock projecting in all sorts of fanciful forms.

For a week or more Professor Archer's party worked along through the foothills, the topographers climbing the highest points from which to run their base lines and sketch in their map work; the geologists wandering among the rocks cracking off specimens and searching for fossils; the naturalists in search of rare birds, animals, and insects, while the whacker end of the outfit loafed around camp, smoking and swapping yarns and caring for the animals.

Ned and Harry had several antelope hunts along the foothills, and the boy had become wonderfully interested in the birds, insects, and flowers of the mesa and foothills. They were all new to him, except the sweetbrier, or wild rose. This he had seen growing in the Virginias and about Washington, but here it grew by the acre and by the mile, rendering the whole air redolent with perfume. Ned was very much interested in a peculiar sort of grasshopper that he found here in abundance, similar in every other respect to the old-time grasshoppers he had caught since he was a small boy, except that this new-fangled hopper was striped with many colors, nearly resembling red, white, and blue. Ned very appropriately called them Fourth of July grasshoppers. He carefully stowed a dozen or two of these little patriots away in his alcohol bottle with his other specimens, but was later chagrined to discover that the alcohol had deprived them of their tricolors, and they had turned a dirty brown. This was further evidence of the old-time assertion that "beauty is only skin deep."

During these days upon the mesa and among

the foothills the young member of the outfit saw many new things and had several new experiences. The Colorado fir, a beautiful tree with its tips and branches frosted over as if with silver, he never ceased to admire. And the magpie, that graceful but saucy bird, with its long tail feathers and shrill voice, which he had seen on the prairies by twos and threes, he now found by hundreds. They were everywhere; the air was full of them. The ragged rocks of the foothills was full of them. Their cry was incessant, and as they flew back and forth from valley to hill and from bluff to bluff their number seemed multiplied by thousands. They were apparently afraid of nothing, and during the marches they frequently lit upon the pack animals and picked stray oats from their manes or from the folds of the canvas pack covering.

Lieutenant Barrington, assisted by Ned, shot and prepared the skins of a dozen of these wild chatterboxes for future mounting.

While breakfast was in progress one morning one of those tireless little Western ponies, with shaggy hair and unkempt mane and tail, was seen coming over the prairie toward camp with that regular, unvarying lope which they can keep up all day long. It was some time before it could be made out whether the pony was ridden by white man or Indian. But gradually the form became more distinct, and in a few minutes the rider saluted the outfit with an awkward nod without a word.

"Holy smoke," said Shep, almost loud enough to be heard by the stranger, "git yer bottle out,

Lieutenant, and ketch it quick 'fore it gits away." The stranger was theoretically a white man, but it would have taken an hour at the dissecting table to have proved it. He was a specimen that even Professor Archer smiled at in spite of himself. His face was spotted by a beard that grew in random tufts here and there, his hair falling far down over his shoulders in tangled, matted locks. His head covering was a maximum of holes and a minimum of Mexican sombrero. He wore a dirty, blue flannel shirt, with one sleeve gone, leaving the arm bare to the shoulder. His chaparios, or leather overalls, besides the intentional fringe down the legs, were hanging in patches and shreds from a great, broad Indian beaded belt. From this belt hung no less than six revolvers of various ages, from the old muzzle-loading horsepistol to Colt's latest navy. Two rifles hung from his saddle, and he carried a third in his hand. A variety of knives were seen sticking from his leggins, belt, and pockets. He was, in truth, a walking arsenal.

"Gee, whiz, stranger, air you the Tenth Cavalry?" asked Jack.

"Well, I hain't all of it, brother; I'm only one troop," replied the man of guns.

"Seems ter me yer takin' big chances ridin' 'roun' these peraries unarmed," said Shep.

"Right ye air, pard, 'specially when they's so many outfits like this a feller's likely to run agin."

"Won't you 'light and have some breakfast?" asked Professor Archer, and the stranger was dismounting before the invitation was finished.

"You bet. Ain't had nothin' t' eat fur three

sleeps, an' this feed o' yourn smells invitin'." He was soon squatting with the rest around the oil-cloth spread upon the ground, while his pony deliberately walked over to scrape up an acquaintance with the pack mules, and, incidentally, to share their oats.

"Have some of these beans," said Shep, helping the newcomer.

"Durned hard ter tell which wuz the man and which wuz the pony tell ye got putty clost," observed Bill.

"Well, 'tis putty hard ter tell the diffunce between a man an' a hoss, sometimes, 'specially when ye've been drinkin' free," replied the stranger, at which the laugh was on Bill.

"Come from the north?" asked Barrington.

"Yep; been ter Cash-le-poo fur elk, but the reds has run 'em all out."

"Say, Guns, have some o' this bread," said Bill, handing the stranger a plate of biscuit.

"When were they on the Cache-la-pou?" asked the Lieutenant.

"They're there now, the lousy devils—they're every one of 'em this side o' the hills, and—say," said he, suddenly pausing in his eating and looking up for the first time from the food, "air this a Guv'ment survey?"

"That's what we claim to be," answered Archer.

"Well, them Utes swore ter me t'other day they'd pickle the whole outfit if you tried ter cross the hills—an' they ain't playin' fight, neither. They're killin' ranchers 'bove here like sheep."

"Are they from White River?" asked Professor Archer.

"Yep; and you know that Piah is the toughest egg in the Ute outfit. He's their boss, and th'ain't nothin' short o' Winchesters that'll drive 'em back. They 'jumped' three weeks ago."

He meant they had left their reservation on White River for the purpose of plundering the ranches on the eastern slope of the mountains, and reports from a dozen places between Cheyenne and the Arkansas River showed that they had not confined themselves to plundering, but had burned ranch houses, and in several cases whitened human skulls and ribs found in the ashes showed that the Utes had gone to extremes that called for the greatest watchfulness and caution on the part of the whites.

"You've got a heap o' truck 'at Injuns is fond of, friends, sich as eatables, drinkables, and clothes, and mules, an' sich, an' I wouldn't counsel ye ter run agin 'em 'less yer spoilin' ter fight. 'Twon't be long, I reckon, 'fore we've all got to chip in an' lick 'em back ter their holes."

"Have you had any trouble with them yourself?" asked Barrington.

"Well, I did run agin a couple of 'em th' other day, but they had antediluvian guns, an' 'twan't hardly worth while pickin' 'em up."

"What, the Injuns?" asked Shep.

"No; the guns. An' one of 'em got away."

"What, the guns?" asked Bill.

"No; one o' the Injuns."

"What 'come o' the other one?"

"Well, he didn't have no further use for his

guns, so I jist captivated 'em and stuck 'em in my belt," said the arsenal, pointing to two out-of-date revolvers in his belt.

"Was that before or after you fell in with this lot on the Cache-la-pou?" asked Barrington, growing interested.

"No; next day, comin' this way. I might o' tackled them on the Cash-le-poo, but I waun't armed for wholesale fightin'. S'pose ye call that a retail outfit o' yourn, do ye?"

But Barrington and Professor Archer were becoming worried, and in no humor to listen to further pleasantries of this sort.

"Well, if those Utes you saw on the river get wind of this affair of yours with the two Indians, they'll be down this way like a cyclone," said the Lieutenant.

"Shouldn't wonder, Cap; but it'll be a good chance ter even up on 'em fur the ranchers they've killed up nigh Greeley."

Barrington, though a soldier and officer, was so familiar with this frontier life that he could not undertake to find fault with this rough fellow for taking the law into his own hands, as he had with the two Indians. The law was too slow and uncertain in its action here on the border, and when the Indians jumped their reservations the settlers in self-defense generally took the shortest and quickest method of driving them back, namely, at the mouth of their Winchesters.

"I'm afraid our work is going to be very much interfered with this season," observed Professor Archer seriously.

Ned was secretly wild with delight. To think

of it. Here he was in the field with armed men and the Indians really on the warpath and a good prospect of being himself in a fight with them.

The stranger in camp showed no disposition to depart in a hurry, and, after consultation with Barrington, the chief decided that it might be well, in view of the attitude of the Indians, to ask him to remain a guest of the outfit for several days, an invitation which the fellow readily accepted, saying that he "hadn't nothin' very partickler on hand just at present."

In a few days "Guns" had become a part and parcel of the outfit. He had helped Harry and Ned supply camp with game, and was as good natured and accommodating as he was dirty and uncouth.

Gun's pony also came in for a regular allowance of oats, a fact which seemed to reconcile him perfectly to a life among plain, hard-working Government mules.

Another march was made, this time bringing the party deeper into the mountains, and Ned saw some great rocks and bluffs that made the mountains he was used to in West Virginia look like pigmies. Up one of these wild, dashing, rocky mountain streams they marched, every turn bringing to view some scenery that opened his eyes to the grandeur of the Great Divide. One great red granite butte stood out on the right bank of the river like a giant guarding the gateway to his possessions. Ned took time to make a careful sketch of this, and the pack train had moved far out of sight before he realized it. He was following hurriedly along in the tracks of

A Rocky Mountain Giant.

the mules when he was met by faithful Harry, who had grown uneasy lest the boy should lose his way, and had returned to find him.

Two miles beyond the giant butte camp was pitched on the river bank—a beautiful spot and an ideal camping place.

CHAPTER XII.

For three days more camp remained on Elk River, and as Ned had no work to do he improved the time in hunting and sketching. He killed several Colorado jaybirds and preserved the skins for future mounting. He discovered a great difference between the jay of Colorado and that of the East. The shrill "jay-jay-jay" sounded the same, and almost brought on a case of real homesickness in the boy. But he missed the white of the Eastern bird, with the blue and black. The Colorado bird he found entirely blue and black, and its topknot turned forward instead of backward. The general characteristics of the bird were the same, however, as that of his Eastern cousin. Then Ned killed several meat birds which were entirely new to him. They were dove color, with white breasts, not unlike the Eastern cuckoo in shape. Their beak was exceedingly heavy and sharp, and Ned soon learned by watching these monsters in feathers that with this great beak they tore their prey (generally small birds) apart piece by piece while it was struggling, and ate the flesh still throbbing with life.

He enjoyed fishing for trout in the cold streams that dashed over the rocks as though in a hurry to get out onto the plains and into the warm sunshine. The trout, too, he found different from those he used to catch in the Alleghenies of West Virginia. He missed the beautiful red specks, and found in their places only dull brown or black specks instead. But when George had fried them to a crisp brown he found they were as dainty and sweet as the red speckled fish of the East.

One morning Ned accompanied the topographers to the summits of some of the surrounding mountains, where he watched with greatest interest their work. He saw them sight through a little instrument resembling a telescope. This he learned was a transit. It rested on three slender legs of wood, through which ran small steel rods to give them strength. These rods projected at the lower ends of the legs, and were pointed, giving an excellent and steady bearing to the instruments when set. He saw Beuchler sight through the instrument and carefuly raise and lower it upon its pivot until he was satisfied with its position. Then from a circular band of brass that moved upon this same pivot he saw him read the figures representing the degrees and fractions of elevations. These elevations were generally the extreme top tips of distant rocks or peaks. These figures he called out to Todd, who sat carefully drawing, in a wide sketchbook, the profile of the mountain ranges in view from this point. Todd turned around as he worked until he completed his sketch at the point where he began. It was beautifully done in outline, showing every

projecting rock or irregularity in the surrounding ranges, and Ned saw that upon the highest and most conspicuous peaks Todd had placed the figures given him by Beuchler.

Ned saw Todd's sketchbook had triangular lines drawn across both ways, forming squares, and in them he was sketching the windings and twistings of all creeks and rivers and other features of the country. This was the first work of transferring the secrets of this new and unknown region to paper.

When the party should return to Washington in the fall, they explained to Ned, large maps would be carefully drawn and engraved from these sketches. They would also show at a glance where the gold, silver, copper, coal, and other deposits are; also the extent of the timber lands, the location and kinds of stone and marble. They would tell the exact elevations of every locality above sea level, so that great schemes for turning thousands of otherwise dry and worthless lands into fertile farms by means of artificial irrigation might be worked out; that is, by damming up great mountain torrents and throwing the water that would otherwise go to waste into canals, leading it into the waste places and distributing it by means of smaller canals to every farmer.

There are in the Southwest many valleys that are dry, lifeless wastes; they are waterless; they have no springs, streams, forests, or vegetation of any sort; they are uninhabitable; they will not support life. Nothing can be raised from their dry, dead soil and sand. The maps and reports of this survey show how and where great lakes

in these mountains can be made to act as reservoirs and pour their waters into these valleys and make them blossom as the rose. Millions of acres of these "bad lands" have already been reclaimed, the result of the work of the United States Geological Survey, which first showed the topography of the country. Can the value of such a grand work as this be overestimated?

Yet how few people of the country know that the Government was then, and is still, conducting such a great work? Many of our legislators who vote money for the maintenance of this very survey have only the vaguest idea of its meaning, its importance, or its immense value to the country. They vote in a perfunctory way for the appropriation for the support of the National Observatory, the Coast Survey, the Geological Survey, and other matters of a scientific character. They do not care to oppose these appropriations because they are afraid of exposing their ignorance. But if it is suggested to enlarge such appropriations commensurate with the growth and importance of the country they are on their feet immediately, declaring that it's "nuthin' but a scheme of them scientific fellers to rob the people;" that "if the appropriation was big enough last year it's big enough now."

Why will the enlightened people of the country continue to send such men to Congress? Stop and think of it a minute, you boys who read this. You will soon cast a vote. Do not vote for a ward politician or an ignorant yahoo who hasn't an idea above the corner grocery. Cast your vote for a man whom you know to be a scholar, a man who

believes in the development of the resources of this great country for the benefit of the whole people. You boys in a few years will control the Government by your votes. Make up your minds now to send good men to your State legislatures, to send men of intelligence to the Senate and House of Representatives, of the United States, and soon you will be proud to listen to the deliberations of Congress, instead of ashamed of the ignorant utterances that so often disgrace the debates now. Soon you will stop the shameless destruction of our magnificent primeval forests; soon you will have splendid roads instead of boggy, disgraceful mud holes; soon great rivers will be harnessed, millions of acres of arid lands will be irrigated and made fertile; soon your country will be held up as a standard for the excellence of its surveys; soon the importation of foreign pauper laborers will stop and the dignity of American labor be established; soon the bravest sailors the world has ever seen will have plenty of the best ships that float; soon American merchant vessels will crowd out the vast fleet of foreign ships that are robbing us of our trade; America will be for Americans, and the country of your birth will rank second to none on the globe. You boys have the power to do all this if you carefully cast your first vote with this great end in view.

From Elk River the party again moved northward, and for a week worked along between the foothills and the main range, with Longs Peak towering above them.

One day while all were in camp and taking

their customary wash-up before supper a party of Utes suddenly appeared, riding toward camp.

"Now, boys," said Lieutenant Barrington, "do nothing rash, and don't allow these fellows to see that we consider them our enemies yet. If we start a row we are as bad as the reds themselves. We are not really at war with them yet, but we must not allow them to take us by surprise. Be ready for instant action, but don't do a thing until they give us cause."

The Utes without hesitation rode up, but halted a hundred yards off, holding the palms of their hands up in token of friendship. "The red devils know they deserve shooting," observed Barrington, "for if they hadn't guilty consciences they would come up without all that nonsense." Barrington had seen Indians before, and had fought them, too.

When the Lieutenant held up his open palm the Utes rode up. Guns's hand twitched nervously, and he ached to bring his battery of shooting irons to bear on the crowd, which was composed of eight bucks, all mounted on good ponies, one of their number leading an extra pony.

One of the bucks, acting as spokesman, begged in his own language for something to eat. Shep, the only one of the party who understood the Ute tongue, interpreted his request.

"Tell him we have only enough for ourselves," said Professor Archer. This Shep did. Then came another request for "sugar for the papoose." This was also denied, and after sitting stolidly looking the camp over for a few minutes they held a consultation in low tones and finally offered their

extra pony in trade. No one needed a pony, however, and the Utes were about to move off, when Bob White concluded that he'd like an extra animal. But it was only after a tedious parley that the bargain was concluded. Bob got the pony, a handsome black mustang, for two blue flannel shirts, a box of rifle cartridges, a hatchet, two plugs of tobacco, and a penknife.

Ned, in the meantime, had been working up a trade with one of the bucks on his own account. He got a beautifully beaded belt of buckskin for a flannel shirt, a pair of small scissors, and some candy that he had stored away in his saddle pockets.

Then the Utes started off, and then, and not till then, did they show particular and mysterious delight in having made the swap. They cast significant glances at one another as they left. Bob saw these manifestations and grew uneasy. What was the matter with the mustang? He certainly was not sick, neither was he old or lame. Was he a "bucker"? Well, Bob was a good horseman, and rather enjoyed a bucking horse. There was much speculation in camp that night as to the status of Bob's new acquisition, which was by common consent dubbed "Injun." But a move must be made next day, and an early march commenced, and after the chief had delegated Bob and Shep to stand guard the first half of the night, and Bill and Jack the latter half, lights were put out and all but the guards crawled into their little fly tents. The night passed quietly, and before the first light of day could be discovered the cook's familiar cry rang out:

"Roll out, roll out, breck-fuss!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Soon the camp that had been slumbering was all astir, and the usual scene of breaking camp began. Bob White had killed two antelope the day before, and as he had a good riding animal, and the size of his new mustang better fitted it for a pack animal, he concluded to make "Injun" the bearer of the camp's fresh meat.

Just as the pack train was ready to move a buck rode up and made signs that he wanted to have a talk. Shep asked him what he wanted, and he replied that Piah (pronounced Pee-ah), the chief of the White River Utes, sent him to tell the white men that they must not cross the mountains; that if they did he would "heap kill" the whole party.

"Tell him to say to Piah, Shep, that we have work to do on the other side of the mountains, and that we shall cross when we get ready. Tell him, too, that if he gives us any trouble we will have the troops at Fort Rawlins down upon him."

"And tell him for me to go to the devil," said Barrington.

"An' tell him," said Bill Slade, pointing to Guns, "that if he gits too gay we'll send this troop of the Tenth Cavalry over and lick his hull outfit."

"Tell him ter cinch up that jaw o' hissen, or it'll git him inter jeopardy," said Bob.

All these messages were duly interpreted by Shep, and the buck rode away, glancing sullenly at Professor Arthur as he turned.

Piah, the Ute Chief.

All being in readiness, the cook started ahead. The hoarse clank of the bell on the bell mare was the signal for the pack animals to fall into line. Bob took the precaution to place a long lariat around Injun's neck so as to keep him in line, the mustang not having been used to following the bell.

It was yet early morning, and but little after daylight, when the calvacade was on the move. The presence of the Utes changed Professor Archer's plans somewhat, and instead of keeping in the hills where an ambuscade could be easily laid, the train was headed out toward the prairie. For miles the animals jogged slowly along. They were not pushed, for a long, hard march was before them. It was a beautiful morning. There was much game astir, and frequently a black-tail buck or an elk would bound in front of the train. But there was plenty of meat on hand, and Professor Archer did not want any unnecessary shooting done to attract the roving bands of Utes which seemed to be so numerous east of the mountains now.

After three hours' marching the party emerged from the foothills to the mesa, heading straight north.

The sun was now getting pretty high and the heat began to tell on the animals. But steadily the tramp was kept up, only one halt being made to allow the packers to take another reef in the pack animals' cinchos, which had grown loose by the settling of the weighty packs.

Suddenly there came a series of sounds like the snapping and cracking of the great flames of a

bonfire. All eyes were turned on "Injun." He was in the air. Doubtless he touched ground occasionally, but appearances were to the contrary. He seemed to have twenty heels going at once and in different directions. He jumped, and jerked, and sprang, and flew, and snorted, and pitched in the most furious manner. Nothing but a Fourth of July spitdevil could have gone through a greater or more varied succession of maneuvers. He was everywhere and in almost every position at once. He cavorted, and spun, and yanked, and shook, and danced, and darted, and whirled, and reared like all possessed. First his head appeared to be where his heels should be under a normal condition of affairs; then legs seemed to radiate and dart from every portion of his anatomy like lightning. For a moment he would be enveloped in a cloud of dust, but the dusty air was full of motion, snorts, and grunts, telling that the terrific gymnastics were still going on. All stood amazed, bewildered, thunderstruck. He lashed the air with his tail, arched his back like a rainbow, and jumped like a kangaroo. His hoofs cracked and clattered like a hailstorm in August. He had all the motions of a windmill in a cyclone, a buzzsaw on the rampage, and a pack of firecrackers in a flour barrel. Then, through the dust and confusion, Injun appeared to break into three pieces like a darting meteor, but it was only the antelope flying to right and left. Yet the hullabaloo continued. Space was filled with innumerable legs, ears, heels, heads, straps, ropes, strings and tails. All was dizziness, excitement, and confusion. Then the meteor

parted again and the pack saddle flew through the air.

Injun kept on. For a full minute after every vestige of his burden had gone the mustang continued to buck. Then suddenly appearing to realize that he had bucked off everything but his spinal column, he stopped. There he stood as gentle as a lamb. Excitement among both men and animals was at snapping tension, but Injun stood there meek and indifferent, self-satisfied, and apparently at peace with all the world. Then it was that Bob blessed the Utes with all the original and expressive adjectives of the packer's vocabulary, and they are numerous.

Only once did Bob try to replace the pack saddle on Injun, the mustang. Injun showed plainly that—as far as he was concerned, at least—a closer relationship between himself and the sawbuck was nevermore to be thought of.

An antelope was secured on top of one of the packs and the train moved on. About noon a river was forded, then a steep and rough climb brought the train to a long line of perpendicular bluffs running almost at right angles with the river. Thousands of magpies were flying to and fro across the face of the rugged rocks above, while dozens of them swarmed about screaming and chattering like mad. This was one of their breeding places, and had the party been emissaries for a wholesale millinery establishment they could have easily secured a cargo of beautiful wings and long, graceful tail feathers. But the supply of magpies already laid in by Barrington and Ned was sufficient for all purposes.

On these marches the slow, jogging gait of the animals and the monotonous but musical clink-clink of the bells on the spurs of the horsemen hour after hour was very apt to inspire Bill Slade to song.

As the train stretched in a long, picturesque line across the mesa Bill lifted up his voice and sang, and the startled prairie dogs came out of their holes and listened to the strange noise, and the fleeing antelope hesitated, stopped, and looked back in wonderment. And Bill's song was of the days of our war with Mexico, when Bill was a young soldier and carried a gun and ate tortilla cakes and chilicolorow, and stormed the heights of Buena Vista, and danced the fandango with the pretty Mexican señoritas.

"Oh, boys, we're goin' fur to fight,
Yeo-ho! Yeo-ho!
We'll take the greasers now in hand
An' drown 'em in the Rio Grande,
'Way down in Mex-i-co!

"We'll hang old Santa Ana soon,
Yeo-ho! Yeo-ho!
An' all his greaser soldiers, too,
Ter the chune o' Yankee Doodle Doo,
'Way down in Mex-i-co!

"We'll scatter 'em like flocks o' sheep,
Yeo-ho! Yeo-ho!
We'll mow 'em down with rifle balls,
An' plant Ole Glory on their walls,
'Way down in Mex-i-co!

"Ole Rough and Ready he's a trump,
Yeo-ho! Yeo-ho!
He'll wipe ole Santa Ana out,
An' put his greasers all ter rout,
'Way down in Mex-i-co!

"An' then we'll march back by an' by,
Yeo-ho! Yeo-ho!
An' kiss the gals we left to home,
An' nevermore we'll go an' roam,
'Way down in Mex-ico!"

Brady, who was riding fifty yards off, called to Ned, and the boy rode over to him.

"Here, Ned, dismount. Here's something for your specimen box. Here is agate and jasper, and I just found this fine topaz." Ned hopped from his broncho and was on his knees instantly, picking up some beautiful specimens of rich red and yellow jasper and moss agate. So eager was the boy, and so plentiful the stones, that he soon had his pockets filled.

To the left lay the foothills, while to the right, and as far ahead as the eye could reach, was one vast sagebrush plain. Sage hens arose as the train advanced, fluttering off in almost unbroken line to the right and left. Antelope were everywhere, bounding off in all directions. Great prairie dog villages were passed, and twice black-tail deer sprang from their hiding place in the brush and darted away like arrows.

It was nearly sunset when Professor Archer ordered a halt on one of those rapid little streams that flow out of the mountains, fed by the melting snows of the higher range.

The air was chilly and the camp fire that was soon roaring felt comfortable. Supper was not long delayed, and the smell of boiling coffee whetted appetites already sharp from the long day's tramp.

Ned spent an hour after supper in his tent writing a letter home, for Barrington had told him that Harry would take all mail that was ready to Greeley next day and bring back mail for the party which Professor Archer had ordered forwarded to that point. It would be the last opportunity to send or receive mail for a long time, he announced to all in camp. Greeley was a little town of a dozen houses out on the prairie, and apparently had no earthly excuse for existence.

CHAPTER XIV.

The following morning Ned decided to saddle Buckskin and ride out a short distance from camp to shoot jack rabbits, though he had been warned by Professor Archer not to venture too far. The packers had been instructed not to leave camp, but to remain and keep guard.

Ned found plenty of his long-eared game loping around through the sagebrush, and enjoyed the sport of shooting them from his saddle immensely. He wished the boys at home could see with what ease he could snipe a rabbit's head off with a .38 ball.

He was so occupied that he failed to notice how far away he was getting, but he knew there was

The Battle of Araphoe Peak.

a ranch somewhere north of camp, and he had seen cattle grazing far off in that direction.

He was about to turn his broncho's head toward camp when suddenly Buckskin seemed to have gone stark mad. He gave two or three wild snorts and started off at breakneck speed. Ned tugged at the reins, but in vain. The old horse was running away. In trying to check the animal Ned's rifle was knocked from his hand and fell to the ground, but Buckskin kept on. Matters were growing serious, and Ned pulled for dear life at the reins, but the broncho seemed possessed and fairly flew over the plain, snorting wildly with every jump. Then Ned saw something else galloping before him, leaving great clouds of prairie dust rolling back. The boy clung to the pommel of his saddle with one hand while he jerked frantically at the reins with the other. But the horse had taken the bit between his teeth, and the bridle had lost its usefulness. The boy might as well have tried to stop a locomotive with a lariat. Now Ned realized that this was not an ordinary runaway. The something ahead was fleeing, and the broncho was madly trying to overtake it. Closer and closer he was getting to the flying object ahead. The horse was gaining in the race. One of Ned's feet slipped out of the stirrup and he came near being hurled to the ground, but held desperately to his saddle, the loosened stirrup meanwhile flying back and forth with every jump of the broncho. Then for an instant the clouds of dust ahead parted and Ned saw a buffalo, with its great head bent close to

the ground, galloping like a mad thing to escape his pursuers.

In a minute more the horse was not two lengths behind. Ned could hear the heavy breathing of the buffalo, while Buckskin was blowing and snorting like a porpoise. Both horse and buffalo had slackened speed through exhaustion, but on they kept, and now the broncho rushed to the side of the terror-stricken animal. The buffalo turned, and quick as a flash the horse whirled and headed it off. Again it turned, and again the horse swung around so suddenly as to almost fling the frightened boy from the saddle. Ned's breath was almost jolted from his body. For another half mile the race kept up, the horse whirling this way and that to head off the buffalo when it attempted to evade his enemies by a countermovement. He then heard some one shouting. The buffalo was now gaining or the horse losing ground. Surely the horse was slacking speed. Ned took courage at this and wildly tugged and jerked at the bridle. Again the boy heard shouts, and he saw two horsemen galloping toward him. The broncho slowed up. The buffalo bull plunged ahead. Then Ned saw cattle scattering before him, the buffalo dashing among them. Suddenly the boy's horse stopped. The buffalo, fifty yards ahead among the frightened cattle, seeming to realize that his pursuers had stopped, halted also. He whirled around, and with distended nostrils and white foam dropping from his mouth, stood glaring fiercely at horse and boy, while his breath came quick and short. The horse, too, was breathing fast and hard.

The two horsemen came dashing up and jerked up their ponies in front of the boy.

"Hold up thar! Stop, you! What in thunder ails you, boy? What're you up to, anyway?" called one horseman.

"Are you gone clean crazy, young feller?" asked the other. By this time Ned had sufficiently recovered his breath to reply.

"Well, I hardly know what I'm doing myself, but I do think this old horse is crazy." Then Ned explained the circumstances.

Then one of the men fairly roared with laughter. It was some time before he could compose himself to speak.

"Great Jehoshaphat! Pard, that old horse o' yourn's an old buffler hunter. Bet he's hunted buffler since he was a two-year-ole." Then answering Ned's inquiring look at the buffalo, which still stood with the cattle, glaring at the group of men and horses, he said:

"That bull, boy, is our'n, and we've raised him since he was a calf with the cattle. He's tame as a turtle dove, he is, an' yer ole hoss has nigh about skeered the life out o' him."

"Say, young feller," asked the other man, "whar'd ye git that broncho, anyway?"

"He belongs to the Government surveying party. I heard one of the packers say they bought him of the Pawnee Indians in Nebraska."

"That's it! I knowed it!" and again the fellow shook with laughter. "Why, that critter knows more'n all of us put together about buffler huntin'. That's why he was dodgin' around so; he was waitin' fur you ter shoot."

"An' I bet he thought you wuz the crazy one fur not shootin'," and again all three laughed.

This was an experience that Ned would not soon forget. It was his first buffalo hunt, and a wild one it had been, too. No Indian rider had ever covered the same amount of prairie in less time. No buffalo had ever been more closely pressed, and it is safe to say no buffalo was ever more astonished than this one at being so madly pursued by man and horse.

As Buckskin gained his breath he pricked forward his ears and looked at the panting bull. Then he gave two or three suspicious snorts, but his ardor was quickly and effectively checked by the reins and spurs. Ned had had enough buffalo hunting for one day. He had a long ride back to camp, and he was afraid his absence might make the packers uneasy.

"Well, sonny, good-by," said one of the cowboys, as Ned started off, "an' I hope you'll git a whack at some genuine wild bufflers before ye go home. You've got the proper animile for it, sure."

"But I wouldn't advise you to run 'round here much alone, boy. They's lots of sly deviltry goin' on where these Utes is nowadays, an' you've got a hoss and revolvers which is quite a valuable outfit, you know, for Injins."

"There's no danger between here and your camp," said the other, "but you tell yer captain he'd best keep his eyes open from now on. There's goin' ter be big trouble with Piah's gang o' Utes before long; good-by."

Ned followed the tracks of his horse and the

buffalo, scanning the ground closely in search of his lost rifle. He found it a mile farther away than he expected, showing how fast and furious his famous buffalo hunt had been.

A week later the outfit was slowly and laboriously working its way up the mountains, with Longs Peak the objective point. After a long, tiresome day's march, in which Ned fairly began to appreciate the difficulties of real mountain work, a halt was made among the pines near a beautiful little lake, in which was reflected the thousands of water lilies that covered its smooth surface. Deeper down in this mountain mirror hung the tall pines and great red and gray cliffs, and still deeper, against a blue more transparent than the sky itself, hung the white giant whose head appeared to reach farther into heaven than it did from the plains. What a beautiful spot for a camp. How still everything seemed. There was a strangeness in the atmosphere different from anything Ned had ever experienced. There was a different sound in the tinkle of the bell mare's bell. It had a faraway sound, and so had the voices of the men. The rocks seemed to stand out with a peculiar distinctness, sharp, hard, and clear cut against the sky.

Ned now began to appreciate the grandeur of these great mountain ranges. The day's march had taken the party often through dense woods of pine, through rocky canyons, and across streams where the water was dashed into white foam in its wild plunge down the ravines. But occasionally they would emerge and cross one of those great fields of rock and bowlders where vegeta-

tion could find no foothold, and from these openings he had seen miles upon miles of mountain walls and snow-capped peaks. He saw cliffs that rose straight as walls into the air, so high that it made him dizzy to look at them. In these cliffs he saw great dark, yawning chasms, or canyons, fairly startling in their magnitude. Some of these same chasms he had seen from the plains weeks before, and from there they seemed but small rifts in the rock. Ned had now entered the Rocky Mountains in earnest. He was in camp on the Snowy Range, the Great Divide, and his experience in the hard work necessary in exploring and surveying a new country was just beginning.

"Now, Ned," said Professor Todd that night, as they sat about the camp fire discussing the events of the day's march, and planning future work, "to-morrow I will explain to you how to read the barometer. We've got lots of big mountains to measure, and you are to commence your duties soon as a mountain measurer."

"An' here's yer tape line, boy, ter do the measurin' with," said Bill Slade, pulling from his pocket a 30-foot tape reel. There was a general laugh at the boy's expense.

"Thank you, Bill; you'd better keep it. You need it to measure some of those big fish you catch in your stories." This turned the laugh on Bill.

"Yes, I hev ketched some mighty big fish in my time, but you beat me a-huntin', Ned. I ain't never chased a hull buffler herd all by my-

self, as you did t'other day up to Curry's ranch." Ned had to join in the laugh in spite of himself.

Later in the evening, after business had been discussed, the prospect of trouble with the Utes was touched upon.

"What do you think of it, Harry?" asked Barrington. "Do you imagine they will worry us any this side of the mountains?"

"No," said Harry. "They'll wait till we get t'other side, if they do anything at all. They can kill settlers here an' there an' steal all the cattle they want, and the whites'll be only to glad to let 'em escape ter their own country and call it square. But they're takin' a putty big contract ter interfere with a Gov'ment survey, an' they know somebody's got ter pay for it. They won't do it till they hev to, but Piah says we shan't cross the mountains, an' he means it. If we git onto Grand River without a fight it'll be surprisin' ter me."

"Am sorry to hear you say so, Harry," said Professor Archer, "but you haven't been all your life among these redskins without knowing them better than I do. But fight or no fight, we've got work to do from here to White River, and we are going over. They won't catch us asleep, however, I can assure you of that."

"By the way, Harry," said Todd, "we've never had anything out of you in the shape of a story yet. Now, come, give us something. Tell us about the hottest time you ever had with redskins."

"Yes, Harry, I'm not going to bed until you tell us a story," said the chief, settling back comfortably against an aparajoe and lighting his pipe.

"There, Harry, the boss says talk, an' ef ye don't, blamed ef I don't lick ye," said Bill. Every man in the outfit insisted that the hunter should tell a story.

"And I further insist that you shall tell us an adventure of your own, too," said Archer.

CHAPTER XV.

If Harry had been surrounded by Indians he wouldn't have hesitated to fight his way through the whole crowd, but now that his chief demanded a story, there seemed absolutely no way out of the difficulty, though the old fellow winced.

"I disremember anything worth tellin', honest," said he. But this didn't go with the crowd that night.

Harry puffed at his pipe and stared into the flames of the camp fire for several minutes.

"Well, fellers, honest, I don't know which wuz the tightest fix, 'less it wuz up on the Big Horn, time I killed Young Horse, the Brule."

This was the first time any man in the outfit had ever heard the old fellow admit killing an Indian, though they all knew that during his long and eventful life on the borders he must have made many a "good Indian" with that old rifle of his.

"That's it exactly; by the way, what was that Young Horse affair anyway, Harry?" asked Archer, who had never heard of Young Horse before. No man in the party had ever heard the old hunter mention the Indian's name.

Crossing the Great Divide.

"Well, you've heerd o' Long Feather, ain't ye?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Archer, "wasn't Long Feather a Bannock?"

"No, he wuz a Brule, too."

"That's so, I recollect now; I believe he was killed in a fight with the Bannocks."

"No, he warn't either," said Harry emphatically, "I killed him myself."

Arthur had to puff vigorously at his pipe to keep from laughing outright. If he had, the story of Young Horse would never have been told.

"Long Feather was chief o' the Brules, but he warn't the slick one that Young Horse was, by no means," continued Harry. "Why, I've knowed Young Horse ter tramp sixty mile in dead winter up inter the Blackfoot camps, hang around until night, kill a chief, steal his pony, drap a few Crow trinkets aroun', accidental like, ride twenty-five mile over into the Crow villages, git thar at night, sneak into the wigwam of some big Crow buck, kill him, drap some Blackfeet fixin's fur the Crows ter find, set the pony loose an' start him back ter the Blackfeet, an' have the whole Blackfoot an' Crow outfits trampin' through the snow meetin' an' killin' each other like sheep, an' that buck Young Horse back on the Big Horn a-settin' by the fire in his wigwam, smokin' his pipe an' laughin' at the whole fool lot of 'em."

Everybody laughed at this laconic recital.

"That's a good story itself, Harry," said Archer.

"Yes," said Barrington, "there's material enough in that for a whole novel."

"Go on, Harry. Where did you run against this fellow Young Horse?"

"I wuz trappin' up in the Brule country one spring, early, when they wuz still snow over the groun', an' some red got ter stealin' from my traps. I 'lowed it wuz a Brule an' I laid fur him. He wuz too slick fur me, though, an' do my best I couldn't ketch him at it. I went inter the Brule village one day and offered ter lick the thief with one han' if he warn't too big a coward ter show hisself. Warn't no use, though, nobody showed up ter fight. One night it wuz snowin' hard an' blowin' a streak. Thinks I, this is the sorter night that thief'll take ter rob my traps ag'in. So out I goes an' takes a steel b'ar trap an' sets it in a holler leadin' ter a trap that'd been robbed before. In 'bout two hours I went out, foun' blood aroun' the b'ar trap and Injun tracks in the snow. Warn't no night fur follerin' Injun trails, though, but in a few days I went ter the Brule camp, saw Young Horse a-limpin' aroun' with a sore leg. He saw me an' tried ter sneak inter a wigwam, but I onto him an' banged him up so bad his own squaw wouldn't a-knowed him."

"Lose anything out o' yer traps after that?" asked Bill.

"No, but that buck tried every way he could think of ter kill me. Shot at me a dozen times I rec'on, hit me twicet, pizened my deer meat, an' done all he could till I got tired of it. One day he shot a lock o' my hair out an' afore he could git away I shot a hole big as a gun bar'l through his cheek. That wuz in the summer. Few days after that Long Feather and his bucks

jumped, burned all the ranches 'long the border, killed everybody an' raised ole Ned gen'ly. The cavalry wuz sent up thar from Fort Laramie, and they hired me ter do some scoutin'. The Major said he wuz goin' ter lick a gang that wuz camped up on Powder River an' they wuz another Brule gang over on the Belle Fourche that he wanted me ter track up, find out how many they wuz of 'em, and meet him a-comin' over an' tell him where they wuz. Well, sir, I rid all night long, an' hadn't eat enough ter make a meal fur a gopher, an' 'bout daylight I got off my horse ter rest him and ter eat a bite. It wuz in a little holler-like in the prairie. While I wuz eatin', my hoss give a little snort and I knowed he smelt Injins. I crawled out o' the holler an' peaked over, an' blame my hide if thar warn't Young Horse a-scootin' along fur all he wuz wuth like he wuz on big bizzness. Seems like he must a-smelt me at the same time, 'cause he just turned round on his pony 'thout stoppin' an' sent a bullet back that struck the ground an' knocked the dirt up in my face. I wuz on my hoss an' after him tight as I could peg 'fore he knowed whether he'd hit me or not. Fur a mile it wuz the puttiest race you ever see, he a-poppin' away at me an' me a-jabbin' bullets at him. Oncet I hit his pony, but that made the durned critter run faster'n ever. Then one o' his bullets jist nipped my horse in the nose an' the blamed critter throwed his head back sudden like and knocked my rifle out of my hand. I wuz in a purty mess fur a fact, but I out with my revolver a-wacken' at the Injun with that. Well, sir, I disremember

now whether it wuz the second or third shot with the revolver that I jist split his gun stock with a bullet and down it went. But he had a bow an' arrers an' he grabbed these. I wuz gainin' on him every jump an' both our critters a-blowin' like steers. One o' his arrers cut my chin open an' it spurted blood furious. Young Horse an' me both knowed somebody wuz goin' ter get killed afore we got through. Well, sir, I wuz jist a-sayin' ter myself it would be risky ter bet who wuz ter be killed when I see Young Horse wuz a-headin' straight fur a gang o' Brules, an' they wuz a-comin', rickety-jig. They wuz a mile an' half off yet, an' I said ter myself I'm in fur it anyhow and blamed if I wouldn't take that Brule buck with me ter whar I wuz goin', heat or cold. The way them two critters did go would o' made yer head swim, but in no time I wuz clost onter the Injun. He pulled another arrer at me, but afore it left his bow I'd blow'd the top o' his head off an' wuz goin' back as fast as pony's legs could carry me. I didn't even take time ter look back, but when I see my rifle a-layin' on the ground I jumped off, grabbed it an' was on jist in time ter git a bullet in my left elbow. One Injun wuz clost onter me an' I drove a bullet at him an' he dropped like a rock. I wuz headin' down hill then, an' fur a minute or two the Injuns couldn't see me, but on they come like a streak. Then I looked ahead and if thar warn't a whole gang right there. Thinks I, Harry, ole feller, Young Horse'll git thar jist in time ter tell 'em you're a-comin'—when I see the outfit ahead wuz cavalry from Laramie. I waved my hands an' hollered.

Quick as lightnin' the soldiers divided ter the right and left an' the blamed Brules run right in between 'em 'fore they knowed what wuz up. Well, sir, them cavalry just lit in an' piled them Injuns up in no time. Only two of 'em got away. An' when I rid back ter look at the chap that shot me in the elbow it warn't nobody but Long Feather. I took off his bead fixin's an' corraled his gun, an' that knife sheath that Ned's got on his belt is Long Feather's. It warn't no time after this fight 'fore the Brules slunk back ter their tepees, fur Long Feather and Young Horse wuz the two mischiefmakers of the Brule outfit."

Harry received a round of applause when he ended his story, for it was a true story of one of a hundred personal encounters that the old fellow had doubtless engaged in during his long life among the stirring scenes of border warfare. The modesty with which the story was told accentuated the bravery of the deed.

Such men as Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, Kit Carson, and our own Harry Yont were the truest of brave men, for they did brave deeds without the hope of ever seeing them exploited in print. Theirs was the bravery natural to all of American blood, and the history of this great country is full of examples of personal heroism to prove that nowhere in the world can be found more fearless men than those born under the Stars and Stripes. Bravery is born with the American boy.

With the first gray light of dawn the pack train was again moving. From Lily Lake the march was a continuous ascent, and the value of the

mule as a mountain climber was never shown to greater advantage. Over vast fields of loose bowlders, over fallen timber, up great rocky ledges so steep that the patient animals could go but a few steps without stopping for a breathing spell, through dark and gloomy canyons, out again into the sunlight, and up, up where there was scarcely foothold for man the weary march dragged. Great fields of granite were crossed where not the first sign of vegetation could be seen. Upward and onward, over cold, icy rocks on which the poor mules slipped and reeled like drunken things. About noon a sense of oppression was felt, and the breathing of man and beast became less free. Every few yards the animals would halt of their own accord, and blow like porpoises. These halts became more frequent as the afternoon progressed. The sun became obscured by clouds—black, wintry clouds—and soon the driving snow and sleet were cutting the faces of the party like sharp gravel stones. No arctic winter ever presented a more dismal sight than did the worn-out and heavy laden mules as they bent against the sharp winds, or huddled together as some heavier gust of snow rushed among them with blinding force. This was a summer day's march, yet Ned had never felt a keener wind whistle through the marble porticos of the Capitol building at Washington in midwinter. Ned pitied the poor animals from the bottom of his heart, as they toiled, panting and groaning, up the mountain. With every step their breath came faster and faster. Both men and animals were

feeling the effects of high altitude and rarefied atmosphere. Ned felt it difficult to breathe, and the voices appeared distant and unnatural. The tinkle of the bell mare's bell sounded a mile away and there was something strange and unreal-like about everything. But here was a new experience and he was willing to undergo all the accompanying hardship for the sake of seeing new and strange places and following the hardy men, whatever they might undertake. Ned took pride in every new thing he accomplished and it was pleasant for him to reflect that as yet he had held his own with all these strong men and had not fallen behind in any of the rigors of this wild life. He was proudly conscious of the fact that he was daily entrusted with more responsibility and that he was not looked upon as a useless tenderfoot. He assisted in bringing the mules up in the morning, in packing the tents and mess chests. He helped put up the tents, arrange the aparajoes, and did full service as a whacker in keeping the mules in line on the march. And now he was soon to carry a barometer and assist in measuring the elevations of these giant peaks for the topographers. Ned felt that he was developing into a useful member of the outfit. He believed, too, that if trouble should come with the Indians he could acquit himself creditably, for he had learned to be a better shot than several of the men. While he could not make up his mind to really wish for a fight, for he felt sure that in such a case at least some of the party must be killed or wounded, yet there was excitement in

the possibility of trouble with the Utes, and he had a vague longing to show Harry and the others that he was nobody's coward, even under the most trying circumstances.

CHAPTER XVI.

Up, up toiled the train, winding in and around the spurs of the great peak, picking the way that was least obstructed by rocks or bowlders, for here were no trails or paths. Everything was just as nature and the elements of ages had left it. Great rocks weighing tons hung on the edges of precipices, requiring but a touch to send them crashing down into the lakes of snow water thousands of feet below. Immense areas of loose rock lay at such an angle on the mountain side that it seemed that at any moment the whole mass might start in one vast avalanche and crush out the tiny mortals crawling over it like so many ants.

The timber that had gradually grown knotty, gnarled and dwarf-like now became nothing but a scattering of little, peculiar-shaped pines, with their limbs growing upon one side only. This, explained Todd to Ned, was because from the time they sprouted on the barren mountain side with foothold only in the moss and lichens the prevailing northwest winds had kept the tender limbs bent around to the southeast until they had grown thus lop-sided. This strange little forest impressed Ned with their great height more than anything he had seen. And then immense snow

The cook and the bell-mare.

banks began to block the way, and as the animals' hoofs crunched through these and they struggled through the snow up to their bellies panting for breath, slipping, sliding, falling, and the packers swearing and bringing their heavy whips down upon the poor beasts, Ned realized, as he had never done before, how terrible was the life of these dumb brutes and how great their suffering in the interests of science. Several times the entire pack had to be removed from the fallen mules before they could rise, and this work did not add to the good nature of the packers. Once Mr. Beuchler nearly met his death by a bowlder weighing tons crashing down and bounding at a frightful speed over into one of these great chasms below. It gathered others in its flight and as the mass slipped and rolled toward the bluff, Mr. Beuchler, by quickly jerking his horse to one side, avoided being hurled into eternity. While all faces were blanched at his narrow escape, the good-natured topographer turned and smilingly observed:

"Dose rock roll down putty qvick alretty, eh?"

As the train ascended, the top of the mountain looked stupendous and its great snow-crowned summit stood startingly clear against the sky. It almost took Ned's breath to look up and think of climbing to the top of the snowy peak above. Every step now brought new ranges of snow-covered mountains into view, and their vastness was a revelation to Ned.

A comparatively level spot was now reached, and a spot among the dwarf pines free from snow selected and a halt ordered. Here camp was to be made, and the poor, tired animals, panting

terrifically, and bleeding from many bruises and cuts, were soon relieved of their burdens.

"It would kill the animals to take them higher," said Barrington to Ned, "and we could get no wood above here for cooking, for this is timber line."

Here was a new feature of the boy's experience. He glanced around. The scattering pines had dwindled into little stubs of trees not over two or three feet high. Here the end of vegetation was clearly shown. All above this point was barren rock and everlasting snow. Ned was, indeed, far up in the air.

There was nothing but the dark lichen covering the rock and a sort of soggy moss growing along the edges of the snow banks for the animals to graze on, but if there had been fields of richest oats the poor brutes would not have undertaken to eat just then. The moment their packs were removed they sank upon their haunches, rolled over on their sides, and looked as though they would never again rise. Meanwhile, the little fly tents were put up and camp arranged for several days.

"This is a high point, and a good one, and we shall be able to do several days' work from the peak," said Todd, to Ned's inquiry as to how long they should probably remain. Each animal was given its allowance of oats where it lay, but it was not until dark that they felt equal to the task of munching their scanty repast.

Supper was late, though all hands helped the cook. While the packers were busy getting out the chests and tents, Todd and Ned carried snow and melted it in large kettles for drinking and cooking water. Barrington, Harry,

and Beuchler sorted over the hominy, sliced the ham, and opened cans of peas and corn. Even Professor Archer volunteered to make the coffee, while George busied himself with the biscuit. There was no story telling that night, and the air was cold and piercing, and every tired man crawled into his tent and pulled the blankets close about him at the earliest possible hour. Ned slept that night 11,000 feet above the level of the sea. It was cold, yet he slept as comfortably as he would have done in his own home. He had learned by experience and through Harry's advice to undress as he would at home, and have no tight-fitting clothing on, binding his limbs and impeding the circulation of blood. When Ned first began camp life in the mountains he had gone shivering to bed without removing trousers or coat, but he found himself almost freezing at night, notwithstanding the great heap of blankets he pulled about him. But Harry had initiated him into the secret of sleeping warm with half the number of blankets, a lesson Ned never forgot.

The morning was cold, gray, and gloomy. Everything fifty yards from camp was shut out from view by a vast cloud bank that went scurring by, sometimes completely enveloping the camp. The northern wind was extremely sharp, and occasionally fine snow and sleet would cut the face savagely. The prospect looked gloomy enough to the topographers, whose work on the mountain tops depended upon unclouded skies and a clear atmosphere. The wind whistled mournfully through the dwarf pines and over the jagged rocks, and the little mountain coney's feeble squeak was

even more dismal than the deathlike silence of this great elevation. This little animal is the only inhabitant of these barren rocks among the clouds.

By noon the clouds vanished, the sun shone brightly, but the air was biting cold. It was too late to attempt to reach the summit of the peak in time for work that day, and the occupants of camp huddled around, wrapped, Ute-like, in blankets, shivering with cold when they stirred from their little tents.

"Ned," said Todd after dinner, "come, and I'll give you your first lesson in measuring the height of these mountains. You must first learn to read the barometer, and as we can't do anything else to-day, we'd better utilize the time in that way."

Todd then took from its sole leather case an instrument three feet long. He selected a nearby rock, and in a crevice he thrust a pole, or stick, and upon the projecting end he hung the barometer. Then he explained to Ned that this was a cistern, or barrel, barometer. It consisted of a brass case with a narrow opening or slit in one side. Into this slit was secured a hollow glass tube thirty inches long, closed at the top and open at the bottom. The lower, or open end, dipped into a cistern, which was much larger in diameter than the tube, and was a glass cylinder below which hung a bag of leather filled with mercury. The bottom of the bag could be raised or lowered by means of a brass screw projecting from the lower end of the barometer. The mercury extended up into the slender glass tube. In the upper part of the cistern, sticking point downward, was a small ivory point or pin.

To set the barometer ready for taking readings it must be hung so as to swing freely, explained Todd. Being quite heavily loaded with mercury in the cistern below, it would adjust itself and hang in a true vertical line. Now the brass screw must be turned up until the top of the mercury in the cistern shall barely touch the ivory point. This done, the instrument is ready to read. The mercury in the long glass tube reached about two-thirds the way up. The air had been extracted from the hollow tube, and above the mercury was a vacuum or space devoid of air. Along the side of the tube was a scale, or vernier, showing the inches and fractions. The pressure of the air on the bag of quicksilver, or mercury, said Todd, would raise or lower that in the tube so that its height might be read as it is in the little thermometers that tell us how the temperature stands.

Most all measurements, he explained, are taken from the level of the sea, for that is a fixed line. At sea level a tube of mercury one inch square is forced up into the tube by the pressure of air in the bag until it reaches a height of thirty inches. Now take the barometer and climb a hill, and the mercury in the tube begins to drop, because the higher the elevation the lighter the air becomes, and the less the pressure on the bag.

"Now remember, Ned," said Todd, "as you go up from sea level, where the mercury in this little tube stands at thirty inches, it will drop at the rate of 1-10 of an inch in 100 feet. When you are 1,000 feet above sea level you will, therefore, find that it has dropped an inch. Now read its height on the scale here, and you will see that it

stands at 19 3-10 inches. Subtract this from the thirty inches, where it stood at sea level, and you will find it to be 10 7-10 inches. At the rate of one inch for every thousand feet, and 1-10 of an inch for each 100, you see we are at this moment standing at a height of 10,700 feet—over two miles—above sea level. While you are reading the barometer on these Rocky Mountain peaks we are having others read at regular hours, at sea level, in Washington, St. Louis, and Denver. These latter places are called base stations. This is done to make the measurements more correct. In the fall, when we return to Washington, we take all these barometric readings, and by carefully comparing them and allowing for the difference in temperature and the dryness or moisture of the atmosphere at the time the readings were taken, we calculate the height of these great mountains. As we progress with our work you will readily learn why we have to consider the dryness or moisture of the atmosphere, the temperature, and other finer points in making these calculations.

Ned was delighted with what he had learned, and was anxious to begin his work in earnest next day.

CHAPTER XVII.

The next morning found the tents covered with new fallen snow and the sun shining brightly. The topographers must ascend the peak to its summit. Climbing is hard work at best, but when

Brady half-soling his trousers.

to it is added the difficult respiration at such great altitudes, only those who have experienced it can form any idea of what physical labor must be undergone in attaining a height of nearly 15,000 feet above the sea.

Todd, Beuchler, Brady, and Ned made an early start. From the outset their climb was a hard one, burdened as they were with theodolites, tripods, and barometers. They crossed great gulches that were filled with the snows of centuries, packed to seventy, eighty, and a hundred feet deep, through which the water had cut deep but narrow canyons. These canyons were of solid ice, and from below, looking up between their walls, only an occasional glimpse of the sky could be seen. Forever these tiny streams of melted snow ripple down between their icy walls, but forever the snows are packing down upon the mountains above, and here winter reigns eternal.

Where the edge of the snow banks thin down the brilliant red snow flower blooms and fades, and they appeared like so many jewels in their somber setting of cold gray rock and ash-colored lichens. Ned had climbed before, but never so high in the air, and never did he work harder. At times the way was over acres of snow fathoms deep, packed hard and solid. Then with fingers almost stiff with cold he was compelled to pull himself by main force, get a kneehold on a projection of rock, and then repeat this performance until he thought he must give up. Occasionally the rocky barrier in front of them was so slippery that the sheath knives had to be used to cut hand holes in the snow and ice. Once Ned

would have given up the struggle had not Beuchler taken a rope, tied it about the boy's waist, while he and Todd went ahead and pulled Ned up a bluff so steep and dangerous that one misstep would have sent them hurling to their death, thousands of feet below. After three hours of such struggle the four reached the summit of the peak, a comparatively level surface about a hundred feet in diameter.

"You vas climb dose mountains putty goot alretty, leedle poy," was Beuchler's compliment to Ned when the summit was reached.

For fully half an hour the three sat upon the snow almost exhausted. But work was to be done. The scene that lay unobstructed before them was calculated to strike one dumb with awe rather than inspire eloquence. Not a word was spoken as they overlooked the vast area of mountain, prairie, and water spread before them. It dwarfed the vision and bewildered the senses. Ned seemed to be looking upon the world from another planet, and through the pale horizon he almost expected to see other planets of the solar system swing into view over the earth's rotundity. The scene was tremendous, awful. A world of prairie spread before him in the east. At his feet, and to the north and south, mountain ranges piled up like so many waves upon the ocean's breast, the higher waves breaking into white caps of snow. Rivers like tiny threads of silver wound in graceful curves among the mountains and across the prairies. Lakes of sapphire and opal garnished the dark plains and valleys. Boundless forests of quaking asp, pine, and cottonwood seemed to

carpet the earth, while about him were fathomless banks of snow, against which the rays of the sun had been powerless for ages.

Ned scanned in wonderment a giant rift in the side of the peak they were on. This great gulch was filled with everlasting snow, and across its white surface sailed the shadow of a large eagle.

"Gosh! What a whopper!" was Todd's prosaic exclamation which woke all to the fact that work was to be done. But first they explored for camp with their field glasses, but if the glasses were focused upon the white tents below they were not strong enough to separate them from the snow spots along the timber line, and the search was given up.

"Now, Meester Morse, ve vill our work begin, eef you blease," said Beuchler to Ned, taking out his sketchbooks and laying them upon the snow.

"You can build a pyramid of rocks there and get your barometers set," said Todd.

Ned went to work with a will.

"Oh, I forgot," he exclaimed, pulling a little silk flag his mother had given him out of his pocket, "Old Glory must wave from this peak," and he stuck the flag on the barometer case for want of a stick, and placed it on the monument he had built, two and three-quarters of a mile above sea level.

Between his barometric readings he busied himself sketching in the profile of the mountains that stood out against the sky in clear relief. Beginning with a peak away in the northwest he gradually worked around himself, the hub, and the mountain range the tire, of a great wheel until he

ended where he commenced. This he did by the old time-honored method of sketching from nature; that is, by holding his pencil out at arm's length against the mountain range, shutting one eye and fixing the space between two peaks by bringing his pencil end against one peak, then running his thumb along the pencil and transferring this distance to the paper. The topographers complimented Ned on the success of his work, and it was apparent to the boy, when he compared his profile to that made by Todd from the same point, that he had done a very clever piece of work.

All worked with mufflers wrapped close about their necks and coat collars turned up to ward off the cold winds, yet yonder on the wide prairies in the east the sun was shining with the heat of summer, and the cottonwood groves were full of singing birds.

"Lucky we are about through our work," said Todd, pointing down upon great white moving billows below them. These were rising clouds, white as snow up here where they were seen from above, but doubtless they were somber gray or black looking from far off there on the prairie. Ned had learned that all clouds, no matter how black and angry and stormy they looked from below, were snowy white when looked down upon from the mountains.

In half an hour more the clouds arose and went scudding along in front of them, occasionally cutting off their view entirely. Thicker and thicker they grew, and it became difficult for the topographers to work. Then the time came for

Ned to again read his barometer. He hastened to it and stooped down. In touching the brass case he felt a slight stinging sensation in the ends of his finger and thumb, but it was so slight that he scarcely noticed it. Then the hair of his head felt peculiar, as though a grasshopper might be crawling through it, and Ned instinctively brushed away the imaginary grasshopper. He was intent upon his barometer, and he took the little thumbscrew in the bottom of it between his forefinger and thumb. Again he felt a twang, sharp, stinging, and uncomfortable, and his fingers felt cramped and drawn. And now his barometer cracked with a noise as though it were being twisted by unseen hands. Ned was astonished, but his astonishment gave way to genuine alarm when he found both his hands so cramped that he could scarcely move his fingers. He jumped to his feet and clasped them together. As the fingers of the two hands came together a dozen sparks shot from the finger tips and stung sharply. Ned turned with a bewildered look and found Beuchler and Todd watching him and laughing.

"Scared, Ned?" asked Todd.

"Better you holt to your barometer on, leedle poy," said Beuchler, "or it vill qvick get down und walk avay pretty soon alretty."

But Ned was too much astonished to reply to Beuchler's jokes.

"Tell me honestly, Mr. Todd, what is it, anyway?"

"Why, boy, that's electricity. You are right up here where old Jupiter Fulminator mixes up his forked lightning. We'll be lucky if we don't get

more of this before we get down off this hill." Todd would persist in calling everything from a prairie dog mound to Mount Etna a "hill."

"I wish that clouds generally, and this cloud in particular, would have a little more respect for hard-working topographers," he continued. "Here, after a tough climb, our work is stopped by a tramp cloud that would be in better business if it were over yonder where it's needed soaking that dry prairie."

By rapid work during the occasional breaks in the clouds the topographers managed to finish their work, and instruments were hastily packed and the descent to camp commenced.

Ned found it equally as difficult, but not as exhausting, to go down as it had been to climb the peak, and after hours of slipping and sliding, and with many bruises and his hands and face bleeding in several places from scratches and cuts, camp was reached. Bill Slade gave the boy three hearty cheers when Todd announced that Ned had accompanied them every step of the way to the top, and had performed his first day's work as a meteorologist.

"Good for you, Ned. I 'lowed when I fust see you that you wuz made o' the right sort o' stuff. You are half hoss, half alligator, and a right smart o' snappin' turtle, as they used ter say about ole Bill Peters, when I wuz wagonin' over on the Smoky River years ago."

"Who was Bill Peters?" asked Professor Wilson.

"What! Never hear o' him?"

"Sorry to say I never heard of Mr. Peters," replied the Professor.

"Say, now, come. Bill warn't that sort o' feller, he warn't. They warn't no 'mister' about him; he wuz plain Bill Peters. Never heard o' him? Well, I can't tell you 'bout him, but I kin sing about him," volunteered the big-voiced packer, and without further ceremony he began:

"Bill Peters wuz a hus-tle-er
From Independence town;
He warn't a college scholar,
Nor a man o' great renown;
But Bill had a way o' doin' things,
An' doin' 'em up brown.

"Bill driv the stage from Independence
Up the Smoky Hill,
An' eberybody knowed him thar
As Independence Bill;
An' there warn't no feller on the route
That driv with half sich skill.

"Bill driv fo' pairs of hosses
Same as you 'ud drive a team,
An' you'd think you wuz a-trab'lin'
On a railroad driv by steam;
An' he'd git you thar on time, you bet,
Ur Bill 'ud bust a seam.

"He carried mail an' passengers,
An' he started on the dot,
An' them teams o' hissen, so they say,
Wuz neber known ter trot,
But they went it in a gallop,
An' kep' the axles hot.

"When Bill's stage 'ud bust a tire,
Ur somethin' 'ud break down,
He'd hustle roun' an' patch her up,
An' start off with a boun';
An' the wheels o' that ole shack o' his
Scarce ever touched the groun'.

"An' Bill didn't 'low no foolin',
An' when Injins hove in sight
An' rattled bullets at the stage
He driv 'ith all his might;
An' he'd holler 'fellers, give 'em hell!
I ain't got time ter fight!'

"Then the way them wheels 'ud rattle,
An' the way the dust 'ud fly,
You'd think a million cattle
Had stampeded an' gone by;
But the mail 'ud git thar just the same,
If the hosses had to die.

"He driv that stage fur many year
Along the Smoky Hill,
An' a pile o' wild Comanches
Did Bill Peters have to kill;
An' I reckon if he'd had good luck
He'd been a-drivin' still.

"But he chanc't one day to run agin'
A bullet made o' lead,
Wich wuz harder than he bargained for,
An' now poor Bill is dead;
An' when they brung his body back
A bar'l o' tears wuz shed."

As Bill finished his song George's welcome voice rang out, calling all hands to supper, and to Ned it never tasted quite so good. His hard day's work had given him an appetite "man's size," as Shep described it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ned had now become quite familiar with the routine of business, which, circumstances permitting, was as follows: Camp being established as high up the mountains as practicable, where water

The loss of Balaam.

and wood could be had, the topographers would work at their map making from the higher points where a good view of the surrounding country could be had. Meanwhile, the geologists were roaming about, examining the rocks, making sketches of the stratified bluffs, or hammering at the rock in search of fossils or other evidence to prove some theory of geology. The naturalists, too, would be searching the woods, plains, and mountains for new specimens of the bird or animal kingdom, and the artist filling his portfolio with typical landscapes, Indians, animals, and other sketches, graphically illustrating the new country. Camp would remain in this spot until the surroundings had been thoroughly worked over, and then another move would be made.

Thus, mile by mile, this country, as little known to civilized man as the heart of Africa, was being explored, its secrets brought to light, its resources studied, and preparations being made to give all the information thus gathered to the people in the form of books they could read and maps they could examine while comfortably seated by their own firesides.

Ned saw all this work going on, and he grew more thoughtful. The maps of his school atlas at home would now have a new meaning to him. He saw the great labor and many hardships endured by both men and animals in providing the material for the first map of a new country. He appreciated more and more the beauties of the arts and sciences entering into this work that he had received but a smattering of at school, and most of which he had regarded only as dry, unin-

teresting studies. Ned's mind was developing with a healthy, permanent growth that school books alone could never give. He was receiving practical lessons that he would never forget. He felt proud to know that in a small way, at least, he was assisting in an important work. He had learned considerable about sketching from nature by watching Mr. Negley draw in the outlines of his subject in pencil and then fill in with broad strong washes of color. Ned improved every spare moment in practice with his pencil. His sketch-books would form a valuable record of his camp life, and something to show his friends when he should return to the East.

Meanwhile, he was making a collection of birds and mineral, geological, and botanical specimens to take home. He was forced to discard many fine specimens, however, on account of the limited capacity of his ore bag, or "war bag," as it was commonly called in camp.

By assisting Lieutenant Barrington in skinning and preparing his birds and animals, Ned soon acquired a knowledge of the art of taxidermy. A bird would be neatly slit down the breast with a sharp knife, the skin carefully turned back and the body removed, only the skull and leg and wing bones being left in. The fleshy surface of the skin was then well washed with corrosive sublimate (a deadly poison), to preserve the skin from spoiling. Then a roll of jute, cotton, or dried prairie grass the size of the removed body, rolled up tightly and the skin drawn over it. A stiff paper cone was then rolled up, and the bird held up by the legs and dropped head first into the

cone, thus preventing the feathers from being turned the wrong way and broken. The open end of the cone was then given a twist and the cone tightly packed in a box with others.

In the winter, when the skins were taken out to be mounted, they would be put into a box of damp sawdust. This would gradually moisten them into pliability again, and a wire skeleton or framework made and covered with cotton or oakum. Over this the skin would be drawn, extra cotton stuffed carefully into all the places not perfectly filled, feathers smoothed down, skin neatly sewed together under the feathers, artificial eyes of glass inserted, and the bird mounted in as natural a position as possible on a bark-covered branch. A similar process was followed in preparing the skins of large animals.

All these specimens gathered by Professor Archer's party would, in time, find their way into the great National Museum at Washington, where every species of American bird, fish, and animal, and every known mineral is carefully arranged, classified, and catalogued. This magnificent museum belongs to the people, and every citizen of the country has free access to it at all times.

For two weeks after ascending Longs Peak the party worked south. They did not keep always in the mountains, for occasionally their work brought them out again into the foothills or on the mesa. The mesa, Ned learned from Professor Wilson, is the high plateau, or tableland, intervening between the prairie and foothills. Thus, there is a gradual ascent from prairie to mesa, mesa to foothills, and foothills to mountains.

One morning at a camp on the mesa, just as the party were seating themselves for breakfast the cook exclaimed:

"Golly! Perfessor Archer, dar's some more of dem Uteses comin'." Four Indian bucks were seen riding toward camp. Without hesitation the uninvited guests rode into camp. They were gaudily attired in beaded deerskin garments, embroidered blankets, their heads decked with otter fur, feathers, and silver ornaments of native workmanship. Then the chief, a very dark complexioned Ute, small of stature, but possessing a remarkably fine face and piercing eyes, strode up and demanded, in very broken English and many signs, to see the "big chief." Professor Archer stepped forward and informed him that he was the "big chief."

"Ugh! Me no like white man come 'cross mountain; no slevay (survey) man. Slevay man take picture so; no good. Utes fight if white man no go back. White man must go back to own res'vation."

This speech was accompanied by innumerable gestures, among which were the motions of a photographer at work.

"Cæsar's ghost! he takes us for photographers," said Brady.

This was true. Undoubtedly the untutored redskins were laboring under the hallucination that the topographers' instruments were cameras. Shep fairly roared. Then he seized a tripod, adjusted it, and throwing a saddle blanket over it stuck his head beneath.

"Now, hold still thar, Mr. What's-your-name

with the dirty face; hold up your chin; smile like an angel an' we'll hev yer mug in a jiffy. Oh, you're a beauty, you are, ain't yer, though."

But Lieutenant Barrington remonstrated with Shep as the chief showed anger.

"Piah big chief! No squaw! White slevay man go way! No want in Injun country! No antelope for white man! All for Injun, all for Piah and his people! White man no cross mountain to Piah's country or Utes kill! No take pictures, no slevay! Piah's braves yonder come to fight!" and the chief pointed to the west.

So this was Piah, the Ute chief, of whom they had heard so much and from whom they expected trouble if trouble came. Everybody realized that the chief was in earnest, and that his visit must be considered seriously. Professor Archer, Barrington and the others held a short consultation in low tones, and decided upon the best course to pursue.

"Piah," said Professor Archer, "I am not the big chief. Big chief is in the San Luis. I am only little chief. We must talk with big chief when he comes. But we have work to do on the other side of the mountains for the Great Father at Washington, and we must do it. When we get through our work we will leave the country to you and your people and go back to our homes."

After much palaver of this sort he invited Piah and his companions to breakfast, an invitation they accepted with avidity.

During a lengthy sign language conversation, while the Indians were eating, it was learned that a week before some five or six Utes had been

found dead with bullet holes through them some twenty miles north. It was not known who killed them, but it had probably been done by some of the ranchmen along the border, whose cattle had been killed by the bands of Utes that had been roaming about since spring east of the mountains. Archer and the others noticed that Piah and his companions were well armed and undoubtedly every buck in the tribe was equally as well provided with rifles and ammunition. The outlook was not quite cheerful.

After breakfast Piah was in a better humor and inclined to linger and pow-wow, but he was offered no encouragement by the white chief. There was work to do, and the whites did not care to waste time in entertaining paint-bedaubed gentlemen of questionable character.

Acting upon the advice of Lieutenant Barrington, Professor Archer, who, with Brady and Wilson, had work to do that must take them from camp, requested all others to remain, and not leave camp in charge of the packers alone, as was the usual custom.

Piah undoubtedly had a strong band somewhere not far away, and, though it was considered by those best acquainted with Indians and their ways, that they would at least give the Government party no trouble until the west side of the mountains was reached, the precaution was taken of leaving the greater number of the party to guard the camp and pack animals.

Ten days after the visit of Piah, Professor Archer's party were encamped in the vicinity of some of the great mines that were then compara-

tively new, but which have since turned out millions of dollars' worth of gold and silver.

The miners far away from civilization were highly pleased and entertained by the arrival of a Government surveying party. Camp was a favorite rendezvous for the miners at night, and they eagerly listened to every scrap of news. They thankfully received from the party Denver newspapers a month old, and they inquired anxiously about the movement of the Utes, of whose threatening attitude they had heard.

Ned found much in the mining region to interest him, and he made many friends among the rough miners. With them there was nothing too good for the boy, and he was taken down into the deep shafts in the great Cornish buckets that were used for hoisting the ore. Here away in the bowels of the earth he saw dirt-begrimed men drilling and picking into the rock and filling the buckets with ore rich in gold, silver, copper, zinc and other valuable metals. This ore he saw hoisted by the machinery above to the shafthouse. Afterwards he saw this ore piled around great cone-shaped heaps of wood on the mountain side, covered with thick coats of mud until the piles resembled Indian wigwams. Then he saw the wood lit from a hole near the ground left for that purpose, and in a few days he saw the mud covering of these piles turn yellow with the sulphur that the fire inside was baking out of the ore, until there was a complete covering of sulphur over these mud cones, which were about ten feet in diameter at the base and twelve feet high. Then this baked ore was taken into buildings of rough planks and

put into crushers, where it was crushed into small particles. After this process he saw this crushed ore put into big iron cylinders, the doors at the ends of the cylinders closed, and the cylinders, revolving slowly by machinery, while a fire underneath kept them hot and the crushed ore was given another baking. When this was taken out Ned saw it was reduced by the heat to a powder, and then put into immense wooden tubs, which revolved rapidly on center pivots. These tubs were arranged in rows, one row a few feet lower than the other, until there were many sets of tubs in a succession of terraces down through the building that stood on the side of the mountain. From the top row of tubs to the bottom a stream of water was constantly running, filling the revolving tubs at the top, and from there it ran into the tubs below until it reached the bottom. A series of steps led from the top tubs to the bottom. Ned saw the ore dust dumped into the top tubs, and saw it start in a dizzy whirl round and round until the water grew muddy and discolored. He was told that this whirligig motion of the water in the tubs separated the metals from the powdered rock and dirt, and that the metal being the heaviest portion of the powdered ore would sink to the bottom of the tubs, while the worthless stuff would keep moving down through the tubs and then run off. Then Ned was shown some heavy canvas bags that hung under these tubs, catching the fine particles of silver as they sunk. One of these bags was taken off and shown him. He peeped in, and saw it filled with a great soft mass of pure silver. In other buildings he saw this silver mass

put into big iron retorts and melted and run into bars.

One of the owners of a mine gave Ned a double handful of silver and assisted him in putting it into a small retort. The silver was placed in small piles about the diameter of a quarter, the door of the retort closed for a few minutes, then opened, and the silver was found melted into beautiful smooth round-topped, flat-bottomed buttonlike pocketpieces. Ned had his pocket full of these souvenirs of the silver mines.

He was particularly delighted at the beautiful specimens of fluorspar he found in such abundance dumped in piles around the mines. He also found great piles of a shiny stuff that appeared to him to be cubes of pure gold, as it lay in the bright sunlight. But found that this was pyrites of iron, a worthless substance, and that soon tarnished when exposed to the air.

June passed and the party had worked through the most magnificent portion of the Rockies. Ned had climbed to the summit of some of the noblest peaks of the grandest range of mountains in this country. He had hoisted his little silk flag high above the clouds on Long, Evans, Gray, Torrey, Lincoln, and other lesser peaks. He had become expert in mountain climbing, though he did not find that climbing became any easier by practice. He did know, however, that the muscles of his legs and arms were becoming tougher and better able to stand hard work and hard knocks.

CHAPTER XIX.

The 2d of July found the pack train winding laboriously up the side of another giant, Arapahoe Peak.

Up, up, thousands of feet they climbed. And tough climbing it was, too, and cold. Late in the afternoon they were again at timber line where there were no sounds to disturb the stillness but the mournful sighing of the wind and the still more mournful coney's squeak. Ned had come to regard their plaintive cry as the most lonely sound in the world and more apt than anything else to bring on a spell of homesickness. This was because it had become associated in his mind with these faraway regions away up among the eternal snows where other life is unknown, where great clouds sweep noiselessly by, and where, except for the occasional thunder of an avalanche, the silence of death has reigned through countless ages.

At timber line a halt was made and camp pitched by the side of one of those little lakes that are fed by the melting snows. This was frozen and a hole was cut through the ice so that the animals could get water, George first filling his kettles and pans with water for cooking purposes. During the early part of the march Ned had stopped with Harry at one of the many rocky brooks that dash headlong down the mountains as though in haste to reach the warmer prairie land, and had caught sixteen fine large speckled trout.

Through fallen timber.

These were served for supper, and afforded a most agreeable change of diet. Nine o'clock found every man in camp snugly tucked in between the blankets. They were no sooner asleep than a low rumble like far distant thunder was heard. It came nearer and nearer and now it sounded as though the whole earth was being riven by a thunderbolt. Ned awoke with a start, and ran from his tent. He saw the others scurrying from under their blankets. The awful noise continued like a dozen thunderstorms meeting in battle. Every man in camp stood irresolute, excitedly looking about, and then at each other. The poor mules and horses trotted toward camp as though seeking the protection of their masters and then stood trembling with fear. They sniffed the air and snorted wildly. Every second added to the tremendous rumbling until it seemed as though the whole mountain range was going to pieces.

"Jumpin' Cæsar! What is it?" cried Bill Slade, but his voice was lost in the roar.

"Earthquake," exclaimed Todd.

Ned's blood ran cold. He realized that some powerful force of nature was at work.

"What is it?" was on every lip.

"What is it?"

"Avalanche," exclaimed Brady and Wilson in the same breath.

"Avalanche," said Professor Archer at the same instant. Then the thunder began to subside and a minute later it suddenly ceased and again all was as still as death.

Yes, it was an avalanche and but a few hundred feet from camp.

At the bottom of a great gulch, acres in extent, on the north of the peak, a bowlder that had probably been poised upon end and bearing the weight of tons of others above it for ages finally found itself pressed just beyond the point of equilibrium. Then it began to move. Those above rushed after it, carrying still others below over which they rolled and leaving no foothold for those above. These slid slowly at first, but, being pressed from behind by tons of others and these in turn by thousands of tons of others, the whole mountain side was soon rushing with the power of Niagara into the chasm thousands of feet below, carrying everything before it, and its fearful weight jarring the earth.

It was a tremendous mass that tumbled from its place on the mountain side, leaving a great bare scar that shone with almost polished whiteness the next morning when the entire party of explorers stood upon the edge of a frightful precipice, looking down upon it.

"This thing is likely to happen at any time," observed Professor Brady, "and as small as you are, Ned, you might in climbing these peaks some day start a bowlder that would end in an avalanche big enough to change the whole profile of the mountains."

Ned fairly trembled at the idea, and at the recollection of places where he had toiled a mile, almost straight up, over great fields of loose rock and snow.

From Arapahoe Peak Ned had the best and most extended view of the Great Divide that he

had yet seen. Many of the highest peaks in the country could be seen from where his barometer hung, a dozen of which he had scaled to the summit. Then away in the west range upon range of mountains lay like giants asleep upon the prairie. In the southwest Ned saw a magnificent peak rearing its head far above its surroundings into the clear blue sky. Upon its side lay a pure white cross of everlasting snow. This, he was told by Professor Brady, was the beautiful "Santa Cruz," or Mountain of the Holy Cross. Its name was given it by the early Spanish explorers who, with awe-stricken countenance, first looked upon this giant sign of their faith looming out from the breast of the peak. The cross, Professor Brady explained to Ned, was two mammoth crevices in the mountain running one across the other and filled a hundred feet deep with snow that never melts.

"Here almost at our feet," he said to Ned, pointing westward, "is Middle Park, a valley extending away off yonder to Grand River. Into this valley we are to go from here. It is the hunting ground of the Ute Indians, and it is there that we shall probably see more of the Utes than we want to."

It was scarcely daylight the second morning on Mount Arapahoe when Ned was awakened by a series of shots and war whoops close to his tent that almost made his hair stand on end.

"Whoop, thar!" bang! bang! bang!

"Hooray fur George Washington an' all of his outfit!"

"Git up thar, boy, and salute the Fo'th o' July" —bang—bang—bang, bang!

Then Ned arose quickly and was soon out adding the noise of his revolver and voice to those of Bill, Shep, Bob, Jack, and Guns. In a minute or two more Barrington emerged from his tent and joined in the grand mêlée. Then came Beuchler and Professors Wilson and Todd, and Negley, and then Professor Archer himself was soon engaged in the hullabaloo. Everything was white with new fallen snow, for it had snowed all night. The little tents were almost hidden beneath the drifts. It was a wintry scene for the Glorious Fourth. But there wasn't enough snow to chill the patriotism of the little band away up there among the wintry clouds.

Bang! bang! bang!

Even the conies squeaked with more spirit than usual as they popped their little heads out of the fresh snow and watched the wild antics of the strange beings that had invaded their quiet home in the skies.

Then Bill Slade shouldered a rifle and began to sing at the top of his voice to the air "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," while the others followed him in a march-around, single file.

"The eagle's a good enough bird fur me,
He is! He is!
He's a bird that is allus attendin', you see
To biz! To biz!
He give the red Injins a mighty black eye,
An' he walluped the British an' didn't half try,
An' he's still on deck this glorious Fo'th o' July!

"The eagle ain't nobody's ballyhoo bird,
He ain't! He ain't!
He's chock full o' ginger an' allus has on
War paint! War paint!
Burgoyne an' his red-coats he blowed 'em sky high,
An' he made ole Cornwallis's British hair fly,
An' he's still on deck this glorious Fo'th o' July!"

Bill's song was cut short by a handful of snow playfully thrown down his neck by Shep.

There were no firecrackers or spit devils or skyrockets in camp, but the snowballs that soon went whizzing through the frosty air of Mount Arapahoe that morning were dangerous enough to have satisfied even the American small boy. Bill retaliated on Shep by a ball landed squarely on that part of the latter's anatomy covered by his vest, doubling him up like a jackknife. Then Bob White sent half a dozen balls in quick succession at each. Bill resented this intrusion with a good hard one on Bob's shin bone, and another good one over his ear. A stray ball took off Lieutenant Barrington's hat, and he, too, entered the battle, and now the fight became general, all hands joining in the scrimmage.

Unlike other battles, however, there were as many sides as there were men, and each side was fighting on its "own hook" and slamming away at anything and everything in sight. Snowballs fairly filled the air, and the poor mules with ears thrown back, and their shivering bodies humped up with the cold, came in for their share of stray bullets. Zell got one across the tips of her ears that made her wince and she vainly tried there-

after to hide herself by burying her head in the snow, as the ostrich does in the sand. Dolly, poor thing, was hit so often that she humped herself into as small space as possible and deliberately turned her back to the belligerents, bracing herself against the next missile that might come whizzing that way.

When action ceased, the casualties were summed up as follows: Bill Slade hit in the mouth and one tooth loosened; Bob White, one ear damaged; Edward Morse, right knee lame; Harry Yont, fingers of left hand stiffened up; Professor Archer, nose slightly damaged; Stacy Todd, lip badly swollen; Lieutenant Barrington, funny bone of right arm unpleasantly shocked; Professor Wilson, eyeglasses knocked off and pipe struck from his mouth and broken.

One stray ball struck George's kettle of coffee, upsetting it in the fire and it was a total loss. This loss was bemoaned more than all the other misfortunes. Guns escaped without a scratch. When the battle ceased and it was discovered that Brady was still in bed comfortably snoozing between the warm blankets he was unceremoniously hauled from his tent by the combined outfit and rolled over and over through the soft new snow, until he gave three cheers for the Fourth of July and promised to be good.

Ned enjoyed, that day, a privilege that few boys ever have. He celebrated Independence Day by a snowball battle 12,000 feet, or over $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, above the level of the sea. Yet that same day he gathered and decorated his tent poles with bunches

of the beautiful snow flower of the Sierras from the windward side of the rocks and drifts where the ground had been left comparatively free from snow.

CHAPTER XX.

THREE days later the pack train which had all day long been struggling painfully up the barren rocks of one of the natural passes in the Snowy Range reached the summit of the pass and a halt was made to give the animals rest. It was but a brief halt, however, and when the poor mules showed a disposition to lie down with their packs and die they were dissuaded by the sharp sting of the packers' lariats. Meanwhile Professor Archer and Lieutenant Barrington with their field glasses closely scanned the mesa far below for signs of Indians.

While they were thus engaged a shrill cry was heard overhead. All eyes were directed above. A large eagle was seen dropping through the air, while his wings flapped vigorously. Recovering his equilibrium, he sailed in a circle for an instant and then shot straight up. There, dropping to meet him, was seen another majestic bird. When they met another series of screams arose, and a battle was on. Feathers flew and came sailing softly to earth while the fight still raged. Talon and beak, and beak and talon. There was a tremendous fluttering of big wings, as the screaming continued. Both birds were slowly descending during the struggle.

Indians were forgotten and every eye fixed upon the fighting eagles. It was a battle royal between two kings. Suddenly, realizing that they were too near terra firma, the birds separated as if by mutual consent and flew off in different directions. But again they flew to a dizzy height, and again they met in combat. It was a magnificent spectacle and the field glasses passed hurriedly from one to another of the men and through them the progress of the fight watched.

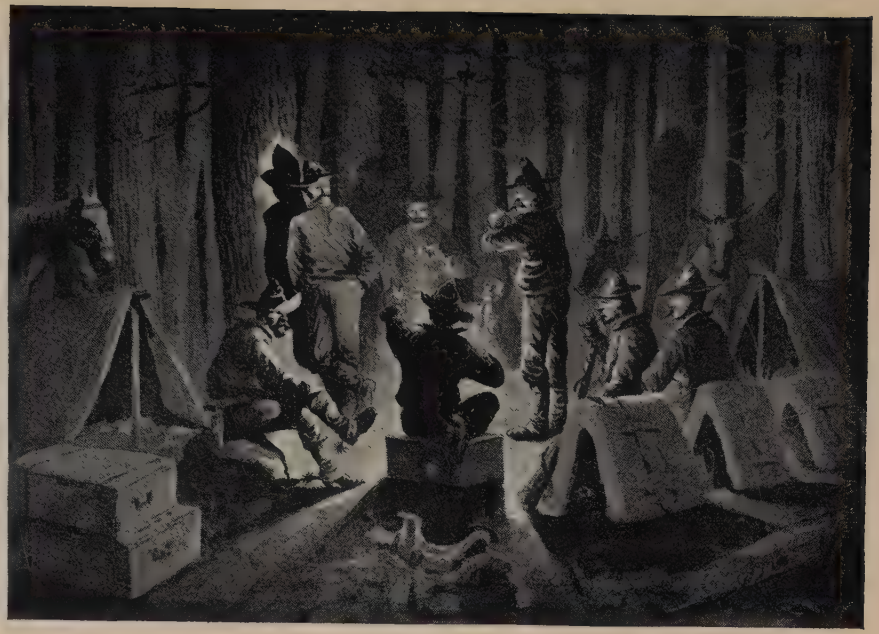
The birds fought with desperation. First one would drop rapidly until he managed to recover himself, then he would rise to meet his antagonist again. Then the other would repeat this performance. At times the birds were far in the distance and only by the aid of the field glasses could anything be seen but dark spots in the sky. Again they would approach the train so closely that the flapping of the mighty wings could be heard. Guns's proposition to stop the fight with a shot was quickly howled down.

"You shoot one o' them birds, an' I'll bury you 'longside it," exclaimed Shep. "This is their fight, this is."

Off they went. Far away into the northern sky until the screams died out altogether and the two kings of the air disappeared entirely.

Ned used to find himself wondering, years after, how this battle of the eagles terminated.

The descent upon the western slope of the mountains soon began. Everyone felt that he was entering the country of enemies. The caravan was pushing its way into what was then the very heart of the wilderness—into regions yet strange to man



Camp in the pine forest.

—into a country still in possession of the Indian, the bear, and the mountain lion. But the men were never in better spirits. The element of danger that was now entering into their work seemed to give zest and buoyancy to their feelings; the tie of brotherhood and good-fellowship, too, seemed stronger among them from the time they began to descend the western slope of the mountains. Perhaps there was a feeling among them that some of the little band might never recross the Snowy Range. If the Utes carried out their threats it was hardly to be expected that the party should remain unbroken. Every man but Professor Wilson realized the possibility of trouble with the Indians, and if such trouble came who could tell what the result might be? The Utes might sweep them from the face of the earth with one blow, for they outnumbered the little band of whites 40 to 1. But even this sober fact did not prevent the good-natured jokes from passing along the train during the march. Bill Slade rode with one leg resting over the pommel of his saddle, lazily tapping Zell with the end of his lariat, while he warbled:

"Oh, good Mister Injin, don't scalp me,
Fur I'm baldheaded, don't yer see?
Scalp, if yer must, some other guy
An' I'll dance at yer weddin' by an' by."

Lieutenant Barrington, Harry, and Jack Sargent rode ahead of the train, occasionally taking little scouts through the rocks or clambering upon some high point from which to get a better view of the country ahead. Once Harry rode hastily back, held up his hand warningly, and the train was

brought to a halt. The hunter had discovered moving objects on the hills far below, but had been unable to make them out with the naked eye. Field glasses were brought into requisition and it was discovered that the supposed Indians were but a herd of antelope, a dozen in number, some feeding, others prancing around in the sunlight. They were so far below that they appeared to be but moving dots on the bare hill. Later in the day the train entered timber once more. The trees, which were all pine, did not grow in thick woods, but detached like orchard trees, and between these the bunch grass grew thick and deep. Among these trees were ideal places for camp, but it was not until the sun was disappearing behind the mountains west of Middle Park that a halt was called.

Here, protected from sight from the surrounding country by the pine grove, and with not a tree or stone to shelter an enemy for half a mile in any direction, the party was safe from a surprise if any were attempted.

"Have you seen anything to-day in the way of unfavorable signs, Harry?" asker Archer.

"Nuthin' but smoke," answered the hunter.

"Smoke? Camp fires, I suppose?"

"Nuthin' in camp fires to be afeered of. They wuz thin sticks o' smoke goin' straight up, and then stoppin'. I'm afeered it wuz Utes signalin', an' if it wuz, we've got ter look out," said the old fellow quietly, with an ominous shake of the head.

Professor Archer adopted the precautionary measure of stationing guard that night, and the animals were picketed in the grove close to the tents. Bill Slade was on duty until midnight,

when he was relieved by Bob White. Bill, who was putting his gun and revolvers in order when Ned crawled into his tent, observed that "he didn't want ter spile no Injuns, but he'd a danged sight ruther do it than ter lose the mules or grub. He didn't want to starve nor he didn't want to 'hoof it' back to Denver."

But the night passed without disturbance of any sort.

"Weariness
Can snore upon the flint, when restive sloth
Finds the down pillow hard."

With the hollow of his saddle for a pillow, Ned slept gloriously until awakened by the cook's familiar call:

"Roll out, roll out, breck-fuss!"

All were soon squatting about the "table"—an oilcloth spread upon the ground.

"George," asked Professor Archer, "what are you going to give us for breakfast this morning?"

"Well, gemmen, I'se sarvin' dis mawnin' broiled pompano maitre d'hotel, potato croquettes, chicken livers en brochette, mutton chops a la provencale, omelette a l'Espagnole, mignons fillets a la Buffalo Bill, and cafe au lait."

This elaborate bill of fare, when divested of George's chimerical embellishments, meant fried hominy, antelope hash, hard tack, and coffee.

At breakfast Professor Archer announced that he and Professor Brady would have considerable work to do in and around the bluffs in the neighborhood, and as the camp was a convenient working point for the topographers, camp would probably remain in the pine grove two or three days.

He cautioned all to be watchful, to precipitate no trouble with Indians with whom they might come in contact; but at the same time he cautioned them to be ready for any emergency. The packers were required to remain in camp for the protection of the property. Harry was to take a scout through the surrounding country west and south during the day and ascertain whether there were any Utes in the vicinity. The topographers and geologists would be at work in the north and east. Ned accompanied the topographers with his barometer, though he could not conceal the fact that he had much rather go with Harry on his scouting expedition. But he received encouragement from Todd, who remarked that they were as likely to run against Indians as Harry.

Ned, Beuchler, and Todd occupied a position on the top of a high bluff overlooking miles of prairie and mesa all day. At the foot of the bluff directly under them acres of wild roses were in bloom, and the air scented with their perfume. Ned, between barometric readings, scanned the country through Todd's field glass, and once he saw moving objects, but they disappeared behind a rise in the prairie before he could make out what they were.

It was nearly sunset when the three, tired and hungry, entered camp. The others had all returned, and no incident of special interest was reported.

A hard day's work made good appetites, and good appetites made a good supper. Then, after supper, yarns were spun, the morrow's work discussed, notes were entered, calculations made, sketches

were touched over, insects and reptiles were embalmed in alcohol, birds skinned and stuffed, geological specimens hammered and examined, guns cleaned and cartridge belts replenished. Then there was some rents to be mended, and it would have made his sweetheart, in her Beacon Street home, blind with tears could she have seen Brady with a darning needle and a buckskin string, half soling a pair of pants that had grown alarmingly thin by close application to the saddle.

Then Professor Archer announced that Jack Sargent would stand guard until 1 o'clock, and then be relieved by Harry Yont. Ned was all excitement, and at the first opportunity, when not observed, he asked the old hunter if he couldn't stand guard with him.

"Yes, boy; glad ter have you, if you think you kin keep awake. You'll find it putty tough work settin' here in the dark lookin' at nothin' all night. Better go ter bed early, an' git all the sleep you kin. I'll wake you at one."

In Ned's excitement at the prospect of standing guard with Harry, standing guard in earnest—when there was really a prospect of surprise by the Indians—he didn't get to sleep until much later than usual, but finally his eyelids did close, and the boy slept. He was probably having unpleasant dreams of some sort when Harry crept into his tent and touched his arm, for he started up and almost shouted: "Go back—back, I say!"

"Hush, boy! Fur goodness' sake, or you'll wake the whole outfit. You've got ter be still to-night. Come on, now, and git yer gun, an' don't speak

louder'n a whisper, an' not then 'less you've got suthin' ter say; this is bizziness ter-night, boy." When the two had emerged from the tent Harry led the way, treading carefully, noiselessly. The grove was a small one, and it mattered little where the guard stood, as the hill upon all sides was easily covered from most any point. But Harry selected the north side of the grove, for at the foot of the hill on that side there was a continuous strip of pine timber running far down into the lowlands, and he knew this would be the most natural point from which an attack would be made, if made at all. Really, the old hunter did not stop to reason this out in a logical manner, but with the experience of many years' dealing with redskins, he knew as well what their course would be if they contemplated an attack on camp as though he had heard it talked over at the counsel fire.

"Here, Ned, you squat here in the shadder of these two trees. I'll be yander agin that one. Don't think I'm asleep if I don't move, and don't speak to me unless you have ter. Wrap this blanket round yer, fur you'll git allfired chilly 'fore mornin'. Now, if you see's much as a shadder movin' anywhere you crawl over ter me, and do it without makin' noise 'nough ter hear it yerself. If you see anything movin' don't stop long 'nough ter make out what it is, but come ter me quick as a streak."

Red Horses.

CHAPTER XXI.

To Ned the first hour that night seemed interminable. He was too excited to get sleepy, and he scanned the side hill and the woods below and beyond until his eyeballs ached. Here he was guarding, in reality, against an Indian surprise. What if he should see one stealthily crawling from the shadow of the woods yonder. And yet, this might happen any minute.

But Ned's thoughts were interrupted suddenly. He thought he saw something dark creeping along the ground there in the hollow. Could he be mistaken? No, there it is again. There's no mistake—and Ned knew, too, that he was fully awake and not dreaming. Something was surely moving. If his eyes did not deceive him, two objects were crawling up toward camp. Quickly he threw his blanket back and crept toward Harry. But the hunter saw his movement, and met him half way.

"What is it, boy?"

"Something coming this way, sure, Harry."

Both crawled back to Ned's place. For two minutes they lay with their eyes riveted on the spot pointed out by Ned. Then the hunter lifted his finger warningly. He, too, had discovered the moving objects. Covering his rifle with Ned's blanket Harry cocked it, and motioned the boy to do the same. This was to smother the click of the lock. Then the hunter leveled his rifle and Ned followed suit.

"Sh! Sh! Don't shoot, boy, till I give you the word."

Then the hunter dropped his rifle's muzzle to the ground, uncocked it, and chuckled.

"Fooled this time, Ned! Them's skunks comin' up the hill—a whole herd of 'em! See," he exclaimed, pointing in another direction, "there's more of 'em. Holy smoke! boy, don't move or you'll wish you'd a died ten year ago. Them skunks is headin' fur this grove, an' we can't stop 'em without bringin' trouble on ourselves."

In less time than it takes to tell the grove swarmed with the little animals. They darted here, there and everywhere in the greatest excitement. They fairly swarmed through the grove, at times running over the prostrate and still forms of the two guards. For fully fifteen minutes they held full sway, then Harry commenced with a noise like the barking of a squirrel made by sucking through a small hole with his lips. At this the little pests stopped and listened. Louder the barking grew, and then came a terrific whirr and flutter that almost scared Ned himself. It was Harry's imitation of a flying partridge. At this the skunks darted off, and Harry arose quickly and threw his arms wildly about him. This added to their fright and they bolted off down the hill and disappeared in the darkness.

"You've got ter go at these pesky animiles gingerly, or you'll get more than you bargained for. If I'd jumped up that way 'thout gettin' 'em sort o' scairt ter begin with, they'd a left suthin' fur us ter remember 'em fur a year." This was all said to Ned in a whisper, for the old hunter

did not for a minute take his eyes off the hillside, or forget that something worse than skunks might appear from the shadows below.

"What brought them up here, Harry?"

"Smelled the bacon George cooked fur supper. They's heaps of 'em this side o' the mountains."

But nothing worse than skunks appeared that night, and when the first gray light appeared in the sky the packers were astir, Ned crept into his tent and slept like a log until awakened by George's familiar call.

Another day passed. All were at work as usual. From an elevated position on the side of a small peak, which Mr. Beuchler named Morse Peak, in honor of the "leedle poy," a compliment that gave Ned a friendlier feeling for the topographer ever afterwards, Ned looked out upon the wide stretch of strange country away off in the west and that far-away-from-home feeling took possession of him strongly.

From the time he began the descent of the western slope of the Snowy Range he felt himself almost entirely cut off from the rest of the world. It looked so very far away across the mesa and prairie to the ragged bluffs beyond. Occasionally, along the foot of these bluffs he could see a gleam of silver in the sunlight. This was Grand River, winding its way southwest to soon merge its waters with those of the Green and form the Colorado, where it would for days boil and surge far down between the walls of the most wonderful canyon on earth, finally sweeping into the Gulf of California and lose its identity forevermore. When Ned looked upon the mountain ranges vanishing in

perspective in the far west the setting sun tinged them with an unnatural and dreamlike glow of fiery reds and yellows, and thought of the long journey he must take, far beyond the furthermost he could see, before he could turn his face homeward, the boy grew almost heartsick.

"Vat's the madder, leedle poy, you vas gedding homesick, alreatty?' asked Beuchler.

"No, I'm not homesick," replied Ned, testily, and he arose briskly and tried to whistle. If this lonesomeness ever took possession of him again he took good care not to let Beuchler discover it.

When the trio reached camp that evening they found the others had returned, and all was excitement in the outfit. Professor Archer, who had been out alone, had been shot at by an Indian in ambush; not with a rifle, but with an arrow. The arrow had whizzed past his head and stuck in a dead pine, where it staid quivering as he glanced up at it for an instant. Quickly he put spurs to his broncho and galloped for camp.

It was too dark to do anything that night, but there was a universal determination in camp to locate the perpetrator of the outrage, if possible.

The work in this locality was finished, and another march was to be made in the morning. The attempt to kill Professor Archer all believed was the work of Utes. It was a treacherous and dastardly scheme to kill the white chief without the noise of a rifle shot to attract attention to the murder. But the use of that arrow aroused the indignation of the entire party, and Bob White declared that it might mean the "wipin' out of the whole outfit; but if it did, it meant that some

greasy Injins would go, too." Guards were doubled that night, Bill and Jack watching until one o'clock, when they were relieved by Bob and Shep.

Daybreak found the party at breakfast—all but one. Harry was nowhere to be found. He had come to bed, but how he had managed to get out of camp without either of the guards seeing him was a mystery. It caused considerable uneasiness in camp, too, because if Harry could get out so easily why couldn't the Utes get in if they made the attempt?

Breakfast over, the mules were brought up into line and packed one by one, while every man rolled his own fly tent up and prepared it for the pack saddle. All were ready to move, and Jack and Bob were just giving an extra pull to Balaam's cincho when Harry appeared from the woods far below, riding Texas.

He soon joined the train, and holding up a feather-tipped arrow, he said:

"Here it is, fellows—Ute! an' I know the redskin that shot it, too!"

"Who?" asked half a dozen at once.

"That liver-colored devil that come back mornin' we left Elk Crick and tried ter skeer us out o' crossin' the mountains—the mornin' after Bob thar traded fur the buckin' mustang."

"See him?" asked Barrington.

"No."

"Smell him?" asked Bill.

"No; but don't you recollec' he rid a pony stringhalt in one hind leg?" Brady and Ned both noticed it.

"Well, sir, them tracks down yonder where I

found this arrer wuz that stringhalt pony's. His left hind foot comes hard down and makes a deeper track than the other hoofs, an' that Injin wuz alone, too."

"But tell me, Harry, how in thunder did you find that arrow?" asked Professor Archer in astonishment.

"Oh, follered yer tracks back till I see whar yer broncho dug his hoofs into the groun' when you punched the spurs inter him," quietly remarked the old fellow, as though it was the easiest thing in the world to go out into strange woods and find an arrow in one tree among fifty thousand others.

"An' now, you grizzled ole sardine, you, I've got a crow ter pick with you," said Shep, pulling out his revolver and filling the chamber with cartridges. "What did you git out o' here without me a seein' you fur? Answer me now, or I'll make a pepperbox out o' that hide o' yourn."

Harry chuckled. He exhibited quiet pleasure in Shep's embarrassing position as an outwitted sentry.

"Well, Shep, how could I a gone out, hoss and all, 'less you two fellers had a been sound asleep?"

Shep and Bob could not help joining in the laugh at their own expense, but Harry, seeing that Professor Archer was curious to know how he managed to pass the guards, explained.

"I wanted ter find out what gang the Ute belonged to that shot that arrer, an' I riz at fust daylight an' had jist put my saddle on my arm and started out o' my tent when George thar hollered 'Roll out.' 'Course, Bob and Shep thar, they took that fur gittin' up time, an' they both left

their places and bolted fur George's fire, 'cause it was putty doggoned cold. Jist as they did I slipt out o' the tent, led Tex easy-like down t'other side o' the hill, and then stopped an' saddled up. Didn't think o' foolin' ye, Shep, but when I see you didn't see me leave, thinks I I'll mystify 'em a little."

"Well, fellers, I'm goin' ter git the red that tried ter kill Perfesser here if I have ter git him in pieces," said Guns, who had become strongly attached to Professor Archer, the chief, who held a warm place in the hearts of the whole outfit for his uniform kindness and courtesy.

A week later, without anything of special interest having occurred, and no further signs of Indians, the train was moving slowly, carefully, and laboriously along a steep and dangerous ledge on the side of the bluffs of Frazer River. It was a picturesque canyon the train was ascending, with the river below boiling and seething, impatient of confinement within its narrow passageway. The adventurous explorers were picking their way along where paths were unknown and deer trails few. Occasionally the bluffs were cut asunder by a heavily wooded ravine, where the marching was less hazardous to life and limb. Here the animals were halted and given a breathing spell.

Much of the time the slippery ledge over which the animals were feeling their way, was so narrow as to render it impossible to march except in single file. Cautiously the animals picked their way along where now every step was fraught with danger. Water, from melting snow above, seeped down through crevices in the rock, saturating the

black lichen that covered the pathway, making it as slippery as ice. Occasionally the pack animals would falter and tremble with fear as they approached a spot unusually steep, narrow, and dangerous. But they were sure-footed and rough shod and they passed many places where they had but a foothold only. At four o'clock in the afternoon the train had picked its way over miles of this unknown passage along the bluffs. The evening air was growing raw and uncomfortable, and a hard day's march was telling upon the poor animals.

Suddenly Balaam, one of the pack mules, slipped. Like a flash of lightning he shot out from the trail and over the precipice. It was a blood-curdling sight, and the other animals halted, and stood trembling in terror. An avalanche of loose rocks followed the mule, and after a terrific journey through space, the surging waters closed over Balaam hundreds of feet below. Only a short halt was made. As well might the party try to move the canyon itself as to try to recover the unfortunate mule. On, on, through gorge and forest, then across acres of bare rock, the weary march went on. An hour later the train entered a broad plateau extending two miles or more back from the river. This was covered with a "windfall," or fallen timber, which the explorers dreaded more than all other obstacles. Every foot of this is torture to both man and beast. The short-lived quaking asp, fallen and piled in every conceivable manner, like jack straws, here extended hopelessly beyond the vision forward, while back from the river it was hedged in by insurmountable bluffs. But for the pack train there was no turning to this side or

that, for difficulties were everywhere. For two long hours the animals pushed their way over this network of fallen timber. Climbing, tottering, falling, the poor things at last emerged into open, standing timber, their legs and sides torn and bleeding from a hundred cuts made by jagged limbs and splinters, and covered with bruises. Like worn-out and wounded veterans just from the battlefield, they halted. Professor Archer then ordered camp to be made. A spot in heavy pine woods was selected, and by dark men and animals were resting, the former sitting closely around a bright camp fire smoking and discussing the events of the day, the latter slowly munching their allowance of oats.

CHAPTER XXII.

THREE days later another march brought the party again into the lowlands. They had just emerged from a belt of woods when they were met by a score of dogs, shaggy, lean, and hungry. Their furious barking soon brought to view a small army of Indians. Soon was discovered an Arapahoe village of ten or a dozen wigwams. The train did not pause, but created great commotion among the papooses, who swarmed about and eyed it curiously. The bucks watched the passing caravan stolidly, with only an occasional grunt. Most of them were lying around lazily smoking their pipes, some were riding their ponies, others were preparing for the hunt. Several squaws had skins stretched upon the ground, the hair side down, with

innumerable little pins driven through the extreme edge of the skin into the ground. With pieces of bone ground to an edge they were laboriously scraping and preparing the skins. An ancient squaw, whose age, judged by her wrinkled and leathery face, might be anywhere from eighty to a hundred years, sat by a flap of her wigwam feeding a large eagle pieces of raw meat. Mr. Negley, the artist, stopped to look at the eagle a moment, and then started off, first throwing the old squaw some beads and a small pair of scissors. She called him back and insisted upon his taking the eagle which he had been admiring. It was like accepting an elephant, but he took it, mentally determining to save future trouble by slaying and stuffing his birdship and stowing him away with other specimens of his rude taxidermy as soon as camp should be made. Then, unhappy thought! The old squaw's tepee or wigwam was decorated with numerous sketches by native artists. In a fit of generosity, "temporary insanity," he afterwards called it, he dismounted, and taking a piece of red chalk from his pocket drew a red horse on the side of the wigwam—a fiery steed, galloping through the air, with flying mane and tail. The sketch occupied but a few minutes, but before he got through nearly the entire population of the village, including dogs, were watching him intently. The Arapahoes showed their approval as the work progressed in numerous grunts. In twenty minutes after the artist had put the finishing touch to that red horse he would have given as many dollars if he had never drawn it. He had to draw a red horse on every wigwam in that village or incur the enmity

of the whole band. As the train was by this time entirely out of sight, Mr. Negley did not feel quite at liberty to refuse any wigwam owner a specimen of his art.

Several days were passed in working up the country drained by Frazer River. One camp was close to the river with perpendicular bluffs upon the opposite bank. The river here was narrow, but deep. Ned saw two large eagles sailing along the face of the cliffs casting shadows twice the size of themselves upon the rocks. He called Harry's attention to them. Then he seized his rifle, aimed at one of the birds and fired. With two or three labored flaps of its wings the feathered monarch dropped into the water, and was soon lying at Ned's tent ready to be packed with his other specimens of natural history.

The next camp, three days later, found the party again in the mountains forming the northern wall of Middle Park. It was a rugged country, and camp was made at timber line on the western slope of a mountain. The topographers were to work from camp, where they had an extensive view of the country. The morning after camp was made, Professor Archer, who was especially interested in the geology of the locality, was about to start off alone. Then he turned his horse back, and called out:

"Ned, my boy, wouldn't you like to go with me to-day?"

The boy was so pleased that he scarcely stopped to accept in words. Shep saddled Buckskin for him while he put his rifle into the holster under the stirrup strap, emptied his saddle pock-

ets, and buckled them behind his saddle. Then, slinging his sketchbook case over his shoulder, he mounted, and the two rode off together.

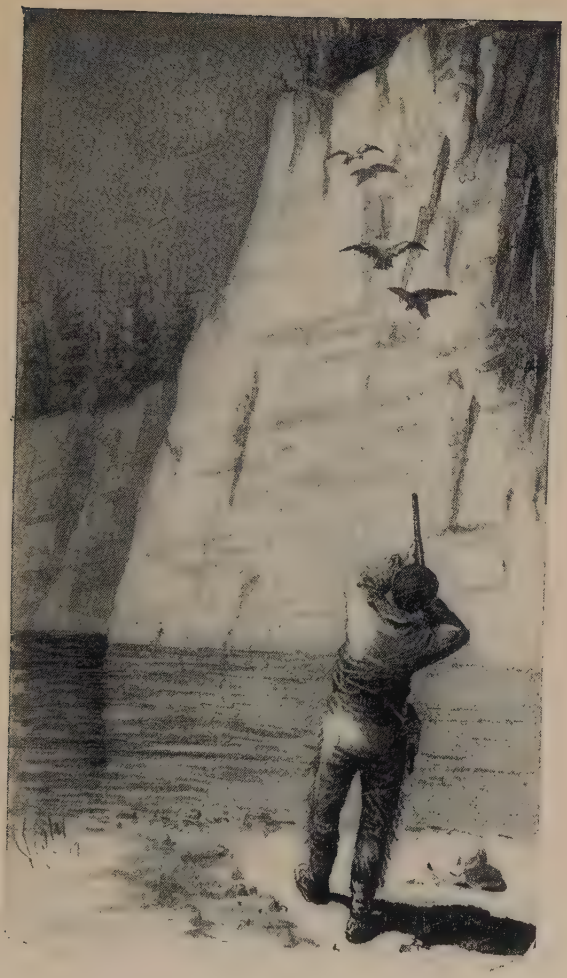
"Perfessah Archer, doesn't you want some lunch put up, sah?" called the cook.

"No," answered the chief, "I think Ned and I will probably be back to camp early. If we don't, we'll find something to eat. Ned and I may dine in the woods to-day on bear steaks."

As will be seen, these parting words of the chief, intended only as a little pleasantry, were prophetic of an exciting adventure.

Following one of the small streams of melting snow water, the horses sliding and slipping over the ice and snow-covered rocks at almost every step, the two finally reached a point below the snow line where great fields of loose rock, worn from the mountain top and gradually carried below by glacial action, made traveling scarcely less dangerous than the snow-covered rocks above. Professor Archer stopped to look at the side of a perpendicular cliff that presented some remarkably arched and bent strata. While he was examining this Ned also dismounted, and throwing the reins over his horse's head, left the animal to nibble around among the moss-covered rocks.

After walking off from the horses a few steps, Ned heard the gurgling and trickling of water below the loose rock over which he was walking. Stopping to listen he heard what appeared to be several small streams finding their way down the mountain side beneath the rocks. Then, too, he heard a deep, resonant sound of water coming ap-



He aimed at one of the birds.

parently from the bowels of the earth. He spoke to his chief about it.

"Yes," answered Professor Archer, "that sound comes from a stream under this great rock bed. The snow on these mountains is apparently everlasting, yet these snow beds, some of them a hundred feet deep, are constantly melting below and as constantly filling up with fresh snows above. This water has found its way through some little fissure in the rock below, and this fissure has by constant action worn into great waterways through which large streams are now forever pouring."

While the chief was explaining this to Ned, the boy saw two white birds as large as domestic pigeons hopping about among the gray rocks.

"Those, Ned, are ptarmigans, or white quails. They are quite rare, and are only found high up the mountains among the snow."

Ned wanted to kill one, but had only his rifle.

"A large ball will tear the bird's skin to shreds, and it will not be fit to preserve. You'd better wait and kill one with a shotgun, using small shot. You'll have many opportunities to get a ptarmigan before we leave the mountains," suggested his chief.

Ned now recollected the fact that once in a spelling match at school he had been turned down on the word ptarmigan. And to this day he couldn't for the life of him understand why that superfluous "p" was allowed to retain its place at the head of a word that it had absolutely nothing to do with. As Shep Medway would say, that "p"

"wasn't any more use than three pairs o' wings to an angel."

There were dozens of conies everywhere squeaking mournfully.

"Ned," said the chief, "I want to examine the rocks down around that little snow water lake we see yonder at the foot of the bluff. I wish in the meantime you'd try your hand at sketching this wall of rock before us. Show the formation as well as you can in pencil."

"I'll do the best I can, Mr. Archer," said Ned, taking out his sketchbook.

Left alone, Ned looked about him. Here he was alone among the highest mountains of North America, in a wild, unexplored country, far from civilization. How tremendous and awful the great mountains below him looked. In places vast sweeps of white billowy clouds floated lazily over the canyons below, leaving only the tops of the peaks above like islands in an ocean of foam.

How insignificant, how little he felt as he glanced around upon his gigantic surroundings. What if he should take one misstep and go to the bottom of one of these fearful gorges that yawned below him on all sides? Away below, fully five hundred feet, he saw a bear picking its way along among the rocks. What if a grizzly or some other big animal should come at him now? But Ned would not have been afraid to encounter even a grizzly. He had learned to shoot well with his rifle, and he had confidence in his aim. How he wished his folks at home could look upon the scene spread here before him. No description could ever convey to them the faint-

est idea of its magnificence. These and a hundred other thoughts filled Ned's mind as he sat upon the gray rocks and sketched the curiously formed bluff before him.

Professor Archer's horse and Buckskin were plodding about among the rocks, nibbling at the coarse black lichen and moss. Poor beasts. This was a hard life for them. But their lot was not a circumstance to that of the patient pack mule whose life of usefulness was limited to only a year with the hard work imposed upon him. True, there must be sacrifice in all great works, but who gives credit to this most useful of all animals for the heroic part he takes in the march of civilization?

When, after two long hours, Professor Archer returned, Ned showed his chief the sketch he had made.

"Did you notice what a strange great arch there is and the curious break in the lines of the different kinds of rock running through the bluff, Mr. Archer?" he asked.

"Yes; and for that very reason I wanted a sketch of it. You are a close observer, Ned, and I like your sketch very much. I may have other work for you to do if you improve in sketching as you have been doing. That break in the lines that you speak of, Ned, is what the geologist calls a 'fault.' It is where the strata or layers of rock have been vertically cracked or seamed, one side slipping away and below the other. Just imagine, Ned, what a tremendous power heaved all that rock into the air, bending it into almost the shape of a horseshoe. That break or fault is the

cause of much annoyance in gold and silver mines. The quartz veins have just such faults. A mine may be running exceedingly rich, when suddenly it ends abruptly. There is a fault in the vein. Search is made up and down, right and left. Sometimes it is found; again it is given up and the mine abandoned. Mines that have been abandoned by reason of the vein running suddenly out have often been entered years afterwards by prospectors who have diligently pegged away until they have discovered the lost vein, and made themselves rich."

The two mounted and kept on down the mountain side. Often their course became so steep that they were obliged to dismount and carefully lead their horses, keeping well to one side, to avoid being crushed if the animals should fall. But horses, as well as mules, soon become quite surefooted when obliged to climb. Especially careful are they after they have had one fall.

Meanwhile the clouds had thickened and rumblings of thunder came from below. The clouds were rolling up in great billows and hurrying from the prairies toward the mountains.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I THINK we'll have snow before night, Ned," said Professor Archer.

"Snow!" exclaimed Ned, "why, it's thundering over there in the west."

"Yes; but thunder, while it means rain out

there, means snow here. That cloud you see coming, lighted up with flashes of lightning, will drench the valleys, but if it reaches us we will get snow instead of rain. You see, the snows of winter pack into these great chasms to such a depth that they never melt entirely. Here in this chasm to our right the snow is a hundred feet deep, and it has probably been a hundred feet deep for centuries. This keeps the whole range as cold as a refrigerator. Then when a thunder cloud approaches, pouring torrents of water upon the plains, it becomes chilled when it approaches the everlasting cold of these mountains and the precipitation from the cloud becomes snow. But that storm we see may never reach this altitude.

"I think I'll have to leave you again, Ned. I want to examine the canyon over there on the left, and I'd like to have you make a sketch of the mountain profile from here looking straight west. It will be good practice for you."

Professor Archer this time took his horse. Ned seated himself comfortably on a rock and worked for an hour. He had finished his profile sketch and had amused himself for some time sketching Buckskin in various attitudes as he browsed about. Then as Professor Archer had not returned Ned decided to ride below to the mouth of a deep ravine where he thought he might find something more of interest to sketch. He turned every few minutes to see if his chief had returned.

Once at the mouth of the canyon Ned found some magnificent subjects for his sketchbook, and he worked away for some time before he noticed

that the storm which had apparently gone around a peak off in the southwest was now coming directly up the canyon, and every minute the thunder grew heavier. He watched the clouds rolling into the gorge, still far below him. It was a heavy storm. This he could tell by the vivid flashes of lightning that were almost invariably followed by great claps of thunder, which echoed a dozen times along the walls of the canyon. What an experience this would be to write home, thought Ned—to witness a great storm from above the clouds. Then he saw that the mist was growing thicker about him. The air was growing very chilly. It was high time for him to return to where Professor Archer had left him, otherwise his chief might miss him and grow uneasy.

Ned mounted Buckskin and, turning, started up the mountain. Thicker and thicker grew the cloud, and before he had gone a hundred yards the boy could not see four horse lengths ahead of him. But he urged Buckskin on, hoping every moment to see Professor Archer's shadow against the bank of mist in front of him. Once he gave a loud hallo, but he realized that his voice could not be heard a dozen yards off in such an atmosphere.

Buckskin meanwhile pricked forward his ears, and seemed ill at ease. The horse's actions worried Ned considerably, for he felt that he must have ridden far enough to have brought him back to where Professor Archer left him. Yet Ned had not found the exact rock where he sat while sketching the profile of mountains, and he was sure he could recognize it if he saw it.

For an hour the boy wandered about in the

clouds, hardly daring to take his eyes off the rocks over which he was riding for fear his horse might plunge into some frightful abyss. The longer he rode the colder grew the air, and then the fine snow beat mercilessly in his face. It stung his cheeks like a blast of sand. It was dangerous to ride in such a storm and as dangerous to stop. How long the storm would last he could not tell. Soon the snow beat so furiously about him that faithful Buckskin turned tail to the wind, laid back his ears and absolutely refused to be coaxed or spurred into going a step farther.

For another half hour Ned crouched shivering in the saddle, wondering what the end of it all would be. But suddenly the wind lulled, the air grew lighter, and in a few minutes the sun burst forth, more beautiful Ned thought than he had ever seen it before. What a weight the sunlight lifted from his heart.

He looked hurriedly about. Not a trace of his surroundings did he recognize. Nothing about him looked familiar. Which way to turn he did not know. The sun seemed to be directly in the east, but the boy knew it was not.

Ned was lost.

He was in a strange country inhabited only by Indians and wild beasts. How far he was from camp he could hardly guess. He had not started out with the expectation of having to find his way back alone. He depended upon Professor Archer. And now that he was separated from his chief he began to feel that his situation was not exactly a pleasant one. Especially was this so

in view of the menacing attitude of the Utes. There was scarcely a hope now of finding his companion. Professor Archer would doubtless hunt for him, but this was a big country where man and horse were but an atom of the landscape. The character of the country, too, made it possible for Professor Archer to pass within a few hundred yards of the boy without seeing him.

Ned made up his mind that it was useless to waste time hunting for anything but camp. This he knew would remain where they had left it for two days at least. He had heard Todd say that it was a good station, and they could work at least three days without changing base.

Camp, he knew, was uphill, and he and Professor Archer had gone down grade ever since they started out. Uphill it was then if he would find his companions. Ned knew that much now depended upon his rifle, and he congratulated himself upon having practiced enough to now be a first-class marksman. He felt confidence in his aim. This was a great comfort to him now. He had made himself a good horseman, too, and Buckskin was no ordinary plug when it came to a race. Ned's greatest danger was in coming suddenly upon wild beasts or being seen by Indians. He cared more to avoid the Indians, so he got into the cover of the rocks as much as possible. Then he stopped to think. There was not a landmark within view that was familiar to his eye. All was strange and new. He was in an elevated valley surrounded by high snow-covered mountains. Ned knew the valley was high up in the mountains, because he could see that timber line was not far

above on any side. If he could only reach a point from which he could get a wide view he felt that he could locate himself by some of the peaks whose profiles against the sky had become so familiar to him since he entered the mountains.

Ned had become so used to the constant clink, clink, clink of the bells on his Mexican spurs that the noise they made had become no longer perceptible to him. But now, strange to say, they sounded as loud as church bells. He quickly discovered this, and taking his spurs off, put them in his saddle pockets. Buckskin, however, did not relish this change. He had become so familiar with the jingle of the spurs that he seemed lost without their music. He hesitated frequently and his ears kept moving alternately forward and back. He felt ill at ease.

Ned was lost in the Rocky Mountains. He urged Buckskin into a strip of woods. The thoughts of having to remain out alone all night were not pleasant. And it must be long after midday now. Ned looked at the sun. He could tell nothing of the time of day by the sun unless he knew the points of the compass. He felt for his compass, but, alas! he had left it at camp. Ned was now like a ship without its rudder. Then he thought of the way Harry had picked out the points of the compass by the moss green color of the north sides of the rocks. He examined the rocks and trees and had no difficulty in determining the north point. Then he looked again at the sun. It was not over three hours high. Ned, too, was beginning to grow hungry, and he remembered with regret that Professor Archer had de-

clined the cook's invitation to wait for luncheon to be put up. If he were farther down he might kill a sage hen, a jack rabbit, or a deer, and he had matches with which to start a fire. But it would not do to either shoot or build a fire. While this might give his friends notice of his whereabouts if they were within sight or hearing, it might bring his enemies, the wild beasts or Indians, down upon him, for the whole party had by this time come to regard the Utes as their sworn enemies.

Ned pushed on as quietly as possible through the woods. He saw an opening through the trees ahead. Perhaps he might here get a clue to the whereabouts of camp. But no! The opening proved only a rocky space devoid of earth enough to grow vegetation. Ned was about to emerge from the woods. Then he pulled Buckskin in hurriedly. He had seen something move under the trees opposite. He had only caught a glimpse of something, but whether it was beast or human being he could not tell. He was still in the shadow of the trees. He watched the opposite side of the rocky space closely. He heard nothing, saw nothing, and was upon the point of starting on when two Rocky Mountain sheep—big horns—walked out into the sunlight. Here was a pretty state of affairs. Game within easy reach of his rifle, and fine game at that, and he as hungry as a wolf, yet he dared not shoot.

"At least," said Ned to himself, "it proves that there are no bears or Indians close by, or those sheep wouldn't be taking it so easily. I'm safe in riding out there," and he emerged into the sun-

light. He saw the two big horns bound down the rocks like rubber balls. They didn't appear to touch the ground at all.

"It's lucky for you fellows that I don't dare use this rifle," said Ned, half aloud, "for if I had, one of you would be going down this mountain alone."

When Ned was fairly out of the woods he saw to the right over the tree tops a rocky promontory that could be easily climbed from one side, while on the opposite it presented the appearance of being a perpendicular cliff. Toward this he rode. He would go to the top at all events, and if he must stay out all night he preferred being among the high rocks. Then, at least, nothing could approach him unheard, for nothing could clamber over these acres of loose rocks without making enough noise to wake the soundest sleeper.

The boy rode to the foot of the jagged rock which rose above its surroundings. Dismounting he tied Buckskin's lariat firmly to a tree, for he could take no chances now. His faithful broncho had never strayed when left with the reins thrown over his head, but extra precaution was necessary now. Ned was fast becoming an adept at climbing rocks, and he soon found himself at the top of this cliff.

It was a wildly picturesque view he found, and one that might delight him under more favorable circumstances, but he lost hope as he looked over into a great canyon where far below a river lashed itself into foam in its rush to plunge down its rocky bed. Ned stood on the bluffs high above this river, the roar of which came to his ears like

distant thunder. This stream he had never seen before. It was strange to him, and he realized that he had been going from rather than toward camp. Ned could not but admire the great canyon at his feet. It was another magnificent feature of America's grandest scenery. Here between perpendicular cliffs that rose as straight as walls of masonry erected by human hands a river was confined that had been surging for centuries unable to escape from its rocky barriers. For a long distance up there seemed no possibility of a foothold among these cliffs. But half a mile below the bluffs rapidly descended to meet a narrow valley running straight at right angles with the river. It appeared to Ned that this valley must continue on the near side, though he could not see from where he stood whether it did or not. He could see flashing in the afternoon sunlight another stream flowing down this valley to join the larger one. On the farther side of this valley, which appeared to be a mile wide, Ned's eyes were fixed. He was about to look elsewhere when he imagined he saw some dark objects moving. Then more of these dark objects came into view from behind the cliffs opposite. Ned could scarcely restrain giving a whoop. He saw his first herd of wild buffalo. For a time he entirely forgot his situation so intent was he in watching the movements of the herd.

He was almost tempted to mount Buckskin and dash down the mountain and get a shot at least. But what if the Indians, too, had discovered the buffalo, and were after them now? Yet this could not be, as the herd was moving leisurely about.

"Oh, if the fellows from camp were only here now. What a time we could have," said the boy half aloud. Then he saw that the western sky was growing red. Surely he would have to sleep in the woods somewhere, for finding camp now this late in the day was out of the question. "Well," thought the boy, "the others stay away from camp and sleep out, why can't I?" Ned now began to look about for a good place to sleep. Leading Buckskin he soon entered a forest on the mountain side. The ground was covered with pine needles several inches deep. These formed a soft and noiseless carpeting, and would have made a very comfortable bed, but they also had the disadvantage of affording Indians or wild beasts an opportunity to slip noiselessly upon him. Naturally he abandoned the idea of sleeping in the woods. After half an hour's search he found a group of bare rocks standing out alone. Upon examination he found that they formed a crescent-shaped inclosure, and when once behind them he felt that the place afforded the best shelter to be found for himself and horse. Securing Buckspin's lariat to the trunk of a little pinon tree within the rocky inclosure, Ned busied himself for an hour by carrying pine needles and spreading them on the ground for bedding. Then he piled loose rocks and bowlders into a rough wall all around his bed for protection against the winds that are always cold at this height in the mountains. Unsaddling his horse, Ned took the two saddle blankets, spread one over the soft bedding of pine needles, reserving the second for covering.

CHAPTER XXIV.

When the sun went down behind the mountains total darkness soon set in. Ned laid down and pulled his blanket close about him, with his rifle and revolver at his side ready for instant use, if necessary. But sleep he could not. There was an awful stillness over everything—except Buckskin. The horse was hungry and restless, and it seemed to Ned that he never knew a horse to do so much moving about, stamping and snorting before. And it sounded, too, loud enough to be heard a mile. Surely something would be attracted by the noise the horse made, and every nerve in the boy's body was in tension. Several times he imagined he heard stealthy steps approaching his rocky retreat. Then he would sit up, and with rifle cocked and ready for action, he would listen, scarcely daring to move a muscle. Would the night never end? It seemed not to Ned. Hour after hour he lay resting upon his elbow, tired and needing sleep, yet not daring to put his head upon the blanket for fear something might creep upon him unheard. He was pulling the blanket closer about him when it seemed to him that he heard a rifle shot far away. For fully half an hour he scarcely moved, but sat listening intently. Then Buckskin, in shifting position, struck his shoe against a rock. At the same instant Ned imagined he heard another shot. Still it might have been nothing but the result of his excited imagination, for who would be shooting

in all this darkness? Finally Buckskin quieted down and was probably asleep. But Ned, whose nerves were unstrung with every noise the poor animal had made earlier in the night, was now equally as nervous at the unnatural stillness that prevailed. For an hour he had held his rifle ready for use, while he listened until his excited brain conjured up all sorts of strange noises off in the woods, yet everything had been as quiet as death. Suddenly Ned's heart almost stopped beating, and he instinctively shuddered. Some small animal went scamping over the rocks almost at his feet and disappeared in the darkness; or, rather, the sound of its movements was lost in the darkness, for Ned had not seen the animal at all. But he knew from the agility with which it moved that it could have been nothing larger than a skunk. Nevertheless, the incident served to rasp harshly on his nerves, and it was long before he ventured to even settle back upon his elbow. The night was intensely black and it was cold. Ned shivered frequently, and cold chills ran through him. He wrapped himself in both blankets and for awhile was more comfortable. He wished Buckskin would awake and browse around as he had done earlier in the night. It would break the awful quiet of the night.

These thoughts were passing through Ned's mind when he saw a glow in the darkness. The glow was double and it moved. There were two small yellow luminous balls out there in the darkness right in front of him. They looked like eyes—and they were eyes—Ned's blood curdled. He was motionless—he could not stir or take his

eyes off the phosphorescent objects before him. They moved, and then they disappeared. But in another instant they reappeared from behind the rocks not ten steps away. Ned heard stealthy footsteps. Should he shoot? What was it that glared at him through the blackness? Then another pair of eyes suddenly appeared and there was a half growl, half whine, and Ned now knew that the glaring eyes belonged to wolves. Quickly he dropped his rifle and grasped his large revolver, and with this he aimed at the yellow eyes. His finger was on the trigger, yet he dare not shoot. Would it not bring other wolves down upon him, or Indians? Back and forth trotted the wolves, whining, snapping, and growling, while they were growing more venturesome and gradually getting closer. Several times Ned resolved to shoot, but was restrained by the thought that a shot might bring greater trouble upon him. Then a howl, loud and prolonged, went up from one wolf, and before it was finished the second one joined in it, and it seemed to Ned the most frightful noise he had ever heard. Emboldened by their own voices the wolves approached, growling savagely. Ned's revolver rang out sharply and a yelp and snarl followed, with a scrambling in the darkness, and the eyes disappeared. For a moment all was quiet, and then a rifle shot, clear, distinct, and unmistakable, came from the woods a quarter of a mile off.

Could it be the men from camp searching for him? Ned believed it was and joyfully he jumped to his feet. As he did so he heard a rustling and scraping sound upon the spot where

he had shot at the wolves. Then all was quiet for an instant, and then the scratching was repeated. Ned now knew that he had wounded one of the wolves, and that it was this that he heard struggling upon the ground. While standing, undecided what to do, there came a call startlingly clear and distinct, and to Ned's joy he recognized Bill Slade's stentorian voice. The voice of an angel from Heaven couldn't have sounded sweeter to the boy. He answered with a shot and a shout, and soon he heard a welcome footfall. Buckskin heard it, too, and whinnied joyfully.

"Is it you, Bill? Look out there! There's a wounded wolf somewhere within twenty feet of you."

"Well, jumpin' Jupiter! boy, whar the mischief hev you been? Ain't ye heard us shootin'? We've been out after ye all night. Ain't a man left in camp. Why didn't ye answer us when we shot? Didn't ye hear us?" Meanwhile Bill was approaching, and now he grasped the boy's hand.

"Did you shoot twice?" Ned asked.

"Holy smoke, boy! we've used a wagonload o' ca'tridges ter-night an' ain't heard nothin' from ye till jist awhile ago. But whar's the wolf ye wuz talkin' about? Let's have a light!" Bill struck a match.

"Let me take that match, Bill, and I'll give you a good light," said Ned, touching the match to the woodpile he had prepared before dark. Soon the rocks and surroundings were lit up by a huge blaze and a dead wolf found with a bullet through its forehead. Ned's aim had been true. Bill now raised his rifle and fired four shots in rapid suc-

cession. This was the signal agreed upon by those engaged in the search for Ned if the boy was found. Far away came answering signals. Bill had left his horse tied to a tree half a mile back. It was still dark, but the old packer urged the necessity for getting to camp as soon as possible, for work was to be done and camp must not be left unguarded.

By noon all were back in camp, which Ned learned was about eight miles from where Bill had found him. Professor Archer had returned to camp about sunset after a fruitless search for the boy, and ordered all hands out upon a searching expedition. But after leaving Ned the chief had had an adventure that Ned would have given much to have participated in.

Professor Archer had gone perhaps a mile down the mountain after leaving the boy. For two hours he had wandered among the rocks. Then he returned to his horse, mounted and again started, moving down hill. His broncho had scarcely taken twenty steps when it threw up its head, snorted wildly and reared so as to almost topple over backwards. A huge black bear had appeared from behind the rocks, and contrary to its usual habit, it did not turn tail and run at the sight of the horse and its rider, but growled, showed its white teeth, and rising upon its hind legs, made straight for the horse. Professor Archer had hard work to restrain his broncho long enough to enable him to pull his rifle strap from over his shoulder. By this time the ferocious bear was close upon the two, the frightened horse backing rapidly over the rocks, threatening every instant

to throw the Professor from his back. Yet the latter managed to cling to his saddle with both feet pressed tightly against the horse's sides. Then he quickly aimed at the bear and fired. A howl of pain and rage greeted the shot. Then another and another, and the bear rushed furiously at his enemies, the blood spurting from his wounds. The horse gave a tremendous lurch, almost throwing his rider into the bear's grasp, but at the same instant a fourth shot rang out and the black beast pitched headlong with scarcely a tremor. The last bullet had only broken one paw, but one of the other shots had reached a vital spot, and death came just in the nick of time to save the Professor from a terrible death.

Two days later the pack train again took up the line of march, and passed the very spot where the Professor's bear was lying. Contrary to expectation, the wolves had not found the carcass, and the skin, a beautiful one, was soon taken off by Bob and Guns, and tied upon one of the packs.

On the march the mule, Dolly, had grown so expert at measuring the distance between trees when the march was through a wooded country that she gauged the distance between two trees to such a nicety that there was sometimes but a few inches to spare to allow her wide spreading pack to pass between them. If she refused absolutely to be driven between two trees it was safe to assume that her pack could not have passed without being pulled from her back. The packers grew to honor Dolly's discretion in this respect, and if she showed an inclination while going through the

woods to back out and try another route they allowed her to have her way.

That afternoon Harry, who had pulled Texas to one side of a narrow pass to allow the train to go ahead, joined Ned, and said:

"Come with me, boy; mebbe we can find somethin' worth shootin' over yander agin them bluffs. It looks ter me like a good big horn country, or mebbe we kin git a goat." The two rode off, intending to join the train at the foot of the mountains. There were two lines of perpendicular rock hemming in a small river. These bluffs were occasionally cut by wooded crevices or ravines that sometimes reached clear down to the water's edge.

"Seems ter be a putty good goat country, Ned."

"I'd like to kill a goat, or, better, a big horn," replied Ned.

"Plenty o' chances, boy; when we git a little ways up yander 'long that rocky mesa we're certain ter see big horns, and some day we'll go—sh! Back! hold up, Ned! There's yer chance—see!" said the old hunter, pointing high up the rocks just ahead of them.

"What is it, Harry, sheep?"

"Sheep, no! Don't yer see thar on that pint? Look! See, jist to the left o' that dead pine layin' agin that rock."

"Yes, yes, I see; what is it? Look at its tail! It's a mountain lion, isn't it, Harry?"

"Yer right, boy; now git down quick and leave the hosses here. Throw yer lariat down an' I'll tie yer hoss to Tex. He won't go away."

In another instant the two were walking quickly forward up a long grassy slope, at the head of

which the ragged bluff barred further progress in this direction.

"Now go slow; he's goin' to light out. Quick, now, yer can't git any nigher. Don't git scairt, now, but aim stiddy, and if ye don't git him, I will."

The lion, far above them, was half crouching upon a projecting ledge, its head bent over, intently watching the movements of the hunters and the horses below. Its long tail was swaying tremulously back and forth in excitement. When the two hunters stopped, the crouching lion half raised itself and glanced quickly over its shoulders as if to see that an avenue of retreat was open.

"Quick, Ned! Now, one—steady now—two—three!" Crack! went the boy's rifle. The lion quickly lashed its tail, threw its head to one side—then as quickly back, his jaws open and his eyes glaring savagely.

"You hit him, boy. There! quick, try again!" Ned quickly raised his rifle and aimed, saying as he did so:

"Don't shoot, Harry, please; let me kill him."

"Go it, Ned, he's your game!" Crack! A howl greeted this shot and the lion bounded up the rocks at terrific speed, but suddenly stopped, whirled, and again looked back as if undecided which way to go—but too long he waited. Ned's rifle rang out again. The lion reared, gave a spasmodic twist of his great body, and came falling from the dizzy height. He struck head foremost, and lay writhing upon the ground. Ned aimed again at the prostrate lion, but Harry said:

"No use, Ned, he's yours—he's done fur—come!"

The two hurried up the slope, Ned running ahead, reaching the animal just as its neck swelled out terribly in its last gasp for breath.

CHAPTER XXV.

Ned was the proudest boy in America that moment. Here he had killed a king of the Rocky Mountains—a puma, commonly called mountain lion—and killed it without an assisting shot from anyone. It was his own game, and a trophy that the best hunter would glory in.

"Thar, boy! You've got somethin' ter show the tenderfeet back East. He's your lion, an' a good 'un, too." Ned fairly thrilled with pleasure over his big game. He walked all around the lion examining it closely. One bullet had struck the brute's thigh and gone diagonally through the rear part of the body. This was undoubtedly the first shot that made the animal throw his head back in pain. The second shot had gone through the throat and neck, and the third had entered the side and ranged upward, coming out in the shoulder; every shot had told.

It took Harry but a short time to deprive the dead lion of his fine coat, to fold it, throw it across Buckskin, and tie it to Ned's saddle.

"A wolf day before yesterday and a mountain lion to-day. That's doing putty well for a tenderfoot, isn't it, Harry?"

"Yes, Ned, an' mebbe an Injun to-morrer, who knows."

For two hours the two traveled without overtaking the pack train. Harry was upon the ground looking for the trail of the mules, when there came through the woods ahead the sound of a familiar voice. It was Bill Slade's. Bill was singing:

"Oh, I love ter hear the angels sing,
I love ter hear the glowworm glow,
I love ter hear the violets warble in the Spring,
An' I love ter hear the dinner-horn blow.

"I love ter hear the patter of the rain
In the Winter when the flowers are in bloom,
I love ter hear the ocean roar ag'inst the winder pane
An' the biscuit singin' in the dinin' room.

"I love ter hear the barkin' of the trees,
An' I love ter hear the caterpillar call,
I love ter hear the turtle an' the periwinkle sneeze,
But the dinner-horn I love the best of all.

"Oh, I love ter hear the tinkle of the cat
An' the singin' of the parsnips in the tree,
I love the serenadin' of the pollywog an' bat,
But the dinner-horn is good enough fur me."

"Bill must be gettin' hungry," said Harry, "an' I ain't very fur behind him myself," and the old hunter took a consolation chew from a plug of black navy.

In a few minutes they joined the train, and Ned was receiving the congratulations of all on the success of his latest exploit.

"Well, Ned," said Bill, "you've got the next biggest game now ter an Injun, an' if you kill one

of them I'll help ye skin him, stuff him and pack his away with the rest o' the animiles."

During the rest of the day Harry and Barrington rode far ahead of the train, taking occasional skirmishes to one side or the other, mounting some promontory and sweeping the country ahead of them with field glasses. Nothing escaped the old hunter's eyes. They seemed to see everywhere and everything at the same time. Little things that the ordinary observer would pass unnoticed he earnestly scanned. Once his quick eye caught sight of a slight abrasion of the bark of a small tree. It was little more than a scratch, but something must have made the scratch. Whatever it was must have left its track nearby. Harry soon found these tracks, and they were pony tracks. That they were Indian pony tracks he knew, for the hoofs were unshod. Then he examined the scratch on the bark again.

"That pony was tied to a limb of this tree," he said, "an' Injins don't tie their ponies less they're up ter somethin'." He examined the limbs and found one showing where a lariat had been tied to it and had worn the bark slightly.

"The pony's head wuz tied so high he couldn't git his mouth ter the ground, an' he's been cribbin' the bark o' the tree."

"How long ago was that?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Yearly this mornin', I rec'on, 'cause the sap's all turned dark sence the pony gnawed it."

"Ute, do you think, Harry?"

"I wuz just wonderin' myself," said the hunter, getting down on his knees and again scrutinizing

the ground, "fur when that Injin tied his pony he must o' jumped off." Soon he found moccasin tracks. Following these a hundred feet or more, in order to find a clearer impression in softer earth, he arose with a satisfied air and as he mounted Texas, said to Barrington:

"No, 'twaun't no Ute; it wuz an Arapahoe buck, huntin'."

"Arapahoe? How could you tell, Harry?"

"His moccasin wuz Arapahoe. They cut their moccasins straight on the inside o' the foot. Utes cut 'em almost straight both sides. The buck wuz follerin' a black b'ar he'd wounded. I see the b'ar's tracks up thar goin' the same way the buck wuz an' the b'ar only made three tracks. Saw a spot o' blood, too, on a rock thar. But Mister Injin lost his game."

"How do you know that, Harry?"

"'Cause, if he'd got him, he'd a come back, led his pony up thar whar the b'ar tracks went, an' packed his game off on the pony. 'Stid o' that, he come back an' rid his pony off tother way. I rec'on," continued the old hunter, "the redskin wuz from a band that's camped over in North Park." Barrington laughed.

"Well, Harry, I believe you've made out a clear case so far, but how in the world do you come to the conclusion that this Indian is from across the mountains in North Park?"

"Well, yer see, Lieutenant, when an Injin is huntin' an' hits a b'ar trail he'll foller it a whole day, or two days, an' he won't stop till he gits his b'ar. This red's tracks come from the north an' he went back that a-way. If he hadn't a been

a long ways from his tepee he wouldn't a give up a wounded b'ar and gone back."

"Right you are again, Harry. But it takes an experienced head to read these wood signs as you do." The two were jogging along at a leisurely gait. Suddenly Harry pulled Texas to a halt.

"Unless it wuz something else," he said, looking Barrington straight in the face.

"Something else, Harry? What do you mean?"

"Unless he run agin a gang o' Utes up thar somewhere. Wouldn't do fur the Utes ter ketch a lone Arapahoe over hyar a-huntin' what they call their game. Lieutenant, let's go back and foller that Injin's tracks up ter whar he turned back," and the two turned their horses upon the back track until they reached the spot where the pony had been tied.

"We'll have ter hurry or the outfit'll be down hyar, an' we don't want 'em ter git ahead of us."

Then Harry dismounted and started again on the trail of the Indian, Barrington riding after him and leading Texas. The hunter had no difficulty in following the Indian's tracks for half a mile, then an opening in the woods appeared ahead of them. Reaching this, Harry motioned the Lieutenant to stop. Then he approached the opening. As he neared it he could see that quite a long stretch of the mesa below was to be seen. Cautiously approaching the edge of the woods, the hunter stopped and for full two minutes stood looking over the lowlands. Then he looked down at the trail again. Again looked off onto the mesa, and as he did he stepped back and motioned Barrington to dismount and approach.

"Take yer spyglass, Lieutenant, an' I'll show you what driv the Injin back." Barrington examined the mesa where Harry indicated, and saw a band of Indians in camp, something over a mile off.

"Don't see any tepees, do you, Lieutenant?"

"No."

"Nor no squaws or papooses?"

"None!"

"Well, that's a huntin' party o' Utes, an' that Arapahoe knowd when he see 'em that he was too clost ter 'em ter shoot, even if he overtook the b'ar. So he jist lit out from these diggins fast as his pony could carry him.

"Now we've got ter ride back and head off the outfit 'fore it gits down this way too far."

"We won't pass any nearer the Ute camp than we are to it now, Harry."

"No, but we don't want that bell mar's dog-goned ole cow bell ter be plunk-plunkin' away when they do git down hyar, a-tellin' them Utes jist what we are, anyhow." The two rode hastily back, and shortly met the train.

"Take that rattle trap off o' yer mar', George; we ain't wantin' quite so much music jist along hyar." George obeyed, and the train moved quietly along, and by sunset was far from the Ute camp. An hour later camp was pitched on the banks of Grand River, at the foot of a rocky mesa or "potato mountain."

"Oh, I love ter hear the angels sing—git out o' them oats, Zell, durn yer hide, ur I'll break every bone in yer body!——

"An' love ter hear the glow-worm glow,
I love ter hear the violets warble in the Spring,
An' I love ter hear the dinner-horn blow!"

As Bill sang he busied himself piling wood on the cook's fire. It couldn't be said, however, that Bill's motives in helping the cook with his fire were entirely disinterested. He knew that the hotter the fire, the sooner the dinner horn would blow.

That night camp was made with extra care. The tents were not so scattered, and the packs and aparajoes were arranged in a circle surrounding the tents, being equally spaced so as to afford protection on all sides alike. In case of attack the packing cases and aparajoes would form good breastworks. The mules were lariated close by, with the picket pins driven in the ground, allowing each animal a radius of about twenty feet of grazing, or the length of his lariat. That night there seemed to be a general feeling that the party was now fairly upon ground where trouble might come at any minute. The ugly stories that had reached them of the depredations committed by Utes to the north and west; Piah's threat, and the threatening attitude exhibited by them generally, sufficiently warranted Professor Archer in taking every precaution possible.

When supper was through and wood piled upon the camp fire, all but Mr. Negley, Todd, and Guns, who were on guard, were seated within its ruddy glow discussing the situation.

If the question under consideration had been the probable date of the great shake-up that had ages ago thrown this region into a chaos of rugged

mountains reaching far into the clouds, the opinion of Bill Slade doubtless would have had less weight than that of Professor Archer. Or if the subject under discussion had been the Iguanadon —that horrid monster that used to wander over the Mesozoic continent eating a forest or two of fine cypress trees for his noonday lunch—Professor Brady's opinion would have been worth more than that of Bob White. But the momentous question as to how to avoid trouble with, outwit, or whip the Ute if worst came to worst was one in which science and "book larnin'" wasn't "in it" with the practical experience of the packers. Then the persuasive way in which these rough diamonds could use Winchesters was worth more than a college diploma at a time like this.

Professor Archer and Lieutenant Barrington especially seemed to view the state of affairs with decided concern. The chief had work to do. A large area had to be triangulated, including the Ute Reservation, and all this part of the territory claimed by them as their hunting ground. This work should all be done by autumn. Trouble with the Indians meant delay if nothing more, and delay meant a most important work unfinished.

"I've already wounded my conscience by lying to Piah about placing the question of our stopping work with this mythical 'big chief'," said he, "and I'm afraid we are not going to be able to stand him off with that romance very long."

Bill Slade advanced the theory that the party could longer avoid a rupture by working in a direct westerly course, heading straight for the Ute

country. He explained that whatever the Utes did they would do as secretly as possible. Any deviltry committed remote from their reservation they could attribute to the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, or Sioux. But they well understood that any depredations committed in their own country would be fixed upon them alone, and would bring the United States cavalry down upon them at once.

There was logic in Bill's reasoning, and later in the evening Professor Archer, who had been thinking the matter over, modified his plans, and decided to head the pack train next day west, toward White River.

"This thing, unfortunately, interferes with our triangulation," said he, "but it's the best that can be done."

"Well, you fellers may git yer tr'angulation sort o' curflummexed a lettle," observed Bill, "but 'tain't nothing ter gittin' yer topknot hung ter a redskin's belt."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Daylight next day opened upon a busy scene of breaking camp and preparing for a march. Packing cases were being filled, tents rolled into the smallest space, mules were receiving their burdens, the cook was hurriedly getting the breakfast dishes washed ready for the packs. Horsemen were already mounted awaiting the packers. When the first rose-colored rays of morning lit up the east, the train moved, heading down Grand

Steadily as a file of veterans.

River. It was an hour after sunrise before a suitable fording place was found, and the faithful mules, having learned by sad experience that there was naught to do but obey the commands of their masters, plunged into the ice-cold stream and waded, neck deep, to the opposite shore.

The course of the train was southwest, and the march would be a comparatively easy one on the animals, for there was nothing but sagebrush plain stretching out before them. Grand River flowed directly west, then swept around southward, and it was diagonally across this great bend that the train was marching. The prairie ended at the river's bank and upon the opposite side north and west rose high walls of rocks that seemed to say to the hurrying stream, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." Finding its way barred in the west, the stream turned to the south, and made its escape through a gap in the hills here, only to change its course again to the southwest, when it emerged upon the other side.

As usual, the monotonous clink, clink of the spurs and the coarse clank of the bell mare's bell set Bill Slade to singing, and the pack mules kept step to a touching ditty commencing:

"I'm fur from my sweetheart,
An' she is fur from me,"

and as Bill sang, he occasionally shaded his eyes with his hand and scanned the prairie to the west and south.

Had Bill looked north, upon the tableland, he

might have discovered a score of bright spots of yellow, red, and blue following the course of the pack train. These bright spots were the gaudy trappings of a band of mounted Indians. They were following the explorers, keeping about the same distance between themselves and the whites, doubtless postponing a closer investigation until a more opportune time. But if Bill had failed to discover the bright spots of color on the mesa, Ned had not. With Professor Archer's field glass, which he carried, he had scrutinized the moving colors closely. The boy first satisfied himself that they were really mounted Indians, then he galloped ahead, overtaking his chief, who was riding with Professor Wilson, and reported what he had seen with the field glass.

Professor Archer rode from man to man, telling them of Ned's discovery, and urging them to be constantly on the alert against surprise. He also directed them to use the utmost caution in dealing with the Utes, whom he felt certain would not be content to remain at such a distance long.

Even Professor Wilson, the cynic, who had scoffed at Piah's threat and insisted that it was mere bluff to frighten the surveyors out of their intended work west of the mountains, was forced to acknowledge that the presence of so large a body was not particularly pleasant.

Ned saw by the manner of Professor Archer and the other men that they took the possibility of trouble more seriously than ever before. He began to realize how different it is to be brave when one is snugly seated in the library at home, reading Indian stories from books than when one is

face to face with the reality. But Ned was no coward. It was not fear that made his face a little paler now than usual—it was excitement. Here he was with but a handful of men in the Indian country, far from all assistance, and Indians in sight who were known to be only too anxious for some excuse to shoot, scalp, and plunder.

Slowly the animals dragged along. Bill had ceased singing and was examining his rifle and revolvers to see that chambers and magazines were filled with cartridges. There was now no sound but the musical jingle of the spurs.

Jog, jog, jog. And yet the bluffs that through the clear air of morning seemed but a few miles ahead now appeared to have moved leagues away.

Toward sunset the tired animals quickened their pace, for instinct or reason—which was it?—told them that camping time was near at hand. Soon the bluffs of Grand River loomed higher. The shadows upon the mountains grew more intense, the western sky was fast assuming the pink and yellow and green hues that tell of another day gone. As these colors were fading into dull blue and gray the caravan reached the river—at this point a shallow stream. The mules now acted strangely. They sniffed the air, snorted, and only moved when urged by the sting of the whip or lariat. Something unusual was in the air.

"Git up here, ye long-eared ijiots! What's the matter with ye? Smell Utes?" And Jack's whip cracked like a rifle. But it was no longer possible to keep the animals in line. They were whipped one at a time into the water and the train finally found foothold on the western bank of the river.

Then the mules became more unmanageable than ever, and it was only by the incessant crack of the lash that they were forced into moving another hundred yards. Here the cause of their uneasiness was found. It was a huge spring of hot water, from which arose a vapor heavily laden with fumes of sulphur. This the poor animals had scented and the uncanny odor had suggested to them something unnatural and startling.

From the side of Mount Bross—a small mountain bare of vegetation—a little stream of water sprang. This stream, hot and strong with sulphur, started on its short-lived journey down the mountain side, tumbled into a great natural basin of rock from five to ten feet deep and twenty feet in diameter. This basin, from which a cloud of vapor was always arising, was constantly filled from the little stream, and as constantly overflowing on the river side, where the waters soon lost their heat by merging with the cold water of Grand River.

"We might as well camp right here, boys," said Professor Archer. "What do you think of it, Lieutenant?"

Barrington, Harry, Shep, and the others held a short consultation. They examined the situation critically as a camping place that might have to be defended, and finally it was decided that camp should be made.

The setting of the little fly tents required but a few minutes' work. Meanwhile the mules were quickly relieved of their burdens, and the aparajoes and camp chests carefully arranged in a circle about the tents and covered with their can-

vases. George, the sable cook, soon had his fire built and supper on. Until supper was announced all hands busied themselves in watering, feeding, and rubbing down their saddle animals, which were tied to picket pins, and these driven into the ground close to camp above the spring.

The season was now approaching when the warmth of the camp fire was exceedingly attractive even in the lowlands, and in a few minutes after George's fire was under way, Professor Archer, Todd, Brady, Negley, and Professor Wilson were huddled about it, their faces and forms lit up by the yellow flames that licked their way upward into the darkness.

"Say, you fellers, scatter out o' that less ye want ter make a target o' yourselves. If that Ute outfit we see out yonder ter-day is anyways nigh about, an' I ain't no doubt it is, they could lay all you fellers out with the fust fire."

"Gentlemen, Jack is right," said Lieutenant Barrington. "A more imprudent thing could not be done than to gather around that fire. Yourselves the best of targets in that strong light, you could not see an enemy twenty yards from here out there in that darkness. We must change our tactics or we may fare the worse for it. At best, we are at the mercy of the Utes if Piah attempts to carry out his threat. That he has threatened justifies us in taking every precaution possible against surprise. While it may have been simply 'bluff,' as Professor Wilson chooses to term it, everything points to the contrary. The Utes are in more than a bad humor, as numerous murders that we have heard of since spring show. We have

seen a large body of them to-day, and we should show ourselves foolhardy not to act from this time on as though we were in an enemy's country and liable to attack." This speech was delivered with great earnestness by the soldier.

"I think the Lieutenant is right, and as he is a soldier trained to command in time of war, and I am not, I turn the military command of this party over to him. Gentlemen, from this moment all orders relating to military discipline given by Lieutenant Barrington must be obeyed. What is your first order, Lieutenant?"

"That you take that lighted cigar out of your mouth, Professor," said Barrington. The Professor joined the others in the laugh, but out went the lighted cigar.

"And, George," continued Barrington, "get your cooking done and put that fire out as soon as possible. And, Bob, you, Shep and Jack take your posts as guards right away, Shep up the creek fifty yards, Jack down the river about the same distance, and you up the river twenty yards beyond the animals. No fires or pipes after dark until further orders, and, Bill, no singing. Cartridge belts, revolvers, and rifle magazines must be kept filled at all times. And now, gentlemen, at the slightest alarm you are to seize your arms and station yourselves behind the aparajoes and packing cases, each to the place I shall designate." Then to each man he pointed out his post. Harry, Bill, and the Lieutenant himself were to relieve the guards an hour after midnight. As the lack of a camp fire left no incentive to late sitting up, all were soon in their tents. Before retiring,

Lieutenant Barrington again cautioned each man to remember the post assigned to him, to not get excited if an alarm were given, and by all means not to shoot unless there was something to shoot at. Not a cartridge was to be wasted. Thus the party retired each with the feeling that he might be called upon to defend himself against a horde of savages before the sun should rise again. This thought was not conducive to early slumber and it was a full hour before all were asleep—except Brady. The geologist couldn't sleep. He was not worrying over the situation, neither was he sick. It was simply one of those times when the brain refuses to rest. After tossing about for an hour a happy thought occurred to him. The opportunity for a warm bath in the rock basin was too good to be lost. He decided to bathe and perhaps after his bath he could sleep. Then he rummaged around in the darkness and from his "war bag" he finally found a change of underclothing. This he laid out in his tent. Then he crept from the tent and groped his way to the sulphur spring not twenty steps away. He enjoyed the smell of the warm sulphur water. For a moment he stood upon the edge of the basin and sniffed the rising vapor.

"It's a beautiful night," mused the geologist, "and this spring is simply great. Think of it. A warm sulphur bath from Nature's own fountain, and away out here in the wilderness, too, where one could hardly expect to find luxuries. Well, I'll take my bath and then go to sleep." Then Brady leaped into the spring.

A piercing yell cleft the quiet night. It was a

blood-curdling sound arising in the dead night, and as every man in camp started up from sound slumber his face blanched and he seized his arms and rushed for his post, determined to sell his life dearly if need be. Then again the terrible yell.

"Ho—lee—smoke! Help! This darned stuff's boiling me! Whew!" and something was heard splashing and sputtering about in the spring.

"What's the matter? Who goes there?" demanded Barrington, with rifle cocked and ready for use, looking into the darkness.

"Gee—whiz! Lordy! But that was hot!"

"What's the row?" said the Lieutenant sternly. By this time a form arose on the edge of the spring. "Who are you?"

"Well, I'm a lobster, and I've just been boiled if you must know," said the form somewhat testily. Then every one recognized the voice. One by one the alarmed garrison that a minute before expected to hear Ute bullets whizzing about their heads took in the situation. Then the roar of laughter that awoke the night must have had a startling effect upon any stray Indians that might have been prowling about.

"Say, fellows, that blamed stuff is as hot as a tea kettle," explained Brady as he walked up, tenderly touching his arms and legs to make sure that his skin was still whole—"that's right, stand there like a lot o' hyenas laughing in the dark."

"Well, gentlemen," said Barrington, "this thing serves to prove that you are all alert, and can be at your posts promptly in an emergency anyway.

He struck headforemost and lay writhing.

I wouldn't have believed that one geologist could have raised such a hullabaloo."

Bill Slade, who was inclined to be cross and ill natured at having been so rudely disturbed during his midnight snooze, went back to his tent grumbling.

"Yes, an' if them doggoned Utes wuz ter come yelpin' down here to-night I rec'on we fellers ud lay here like ijiots thinkin' it wuz that rock-smasher a-takin' another hot bath."

CHAPTER XXVII.

In another hour the guards were relieved, and morning came without further incident. Lieutenant Barrington, who had relieved Bob White up the river beyond the animals, however, reported that once during the night he was quite sure he had seen a moving figure in the darkness near the river bank. While George was preparing breakfast Harry and Barrington went up to make an examination.

"It may have been only a coyote, but see it I certainly did—and as near as I can judge about here"—said he. Harry got down on his knees and scrutinized the ground closely. Then he arose, and, stooping, with his eyes still upon the ground, took some twenty steps toward the river. Here he turned and retraced his steps, still eyeing the ground. Then he straightened up and said:

"Just as I expected when you told us what ye saw here last night."

"What is it, Harry—coyote?"

"Nary coyote, Lieutenant. They wuz two Utes here last night, an' if they hadn't knowed camp wuz putty well watched they'd a-done what they come fur."

"Think they intended to attract our attention this way while the gang came upon us from the other side?"

"No, not till they got our animiles away from us. Then two bucks snuck here thinkin' they'd stampede our hosses and mules, git 'em away from us an' then they'd have their own way."

"Think that was their game?"

"Yes, fur if they'd been lookin' fur a fight they'd a-stayed up yander on the hill 'bove camp. It was the animiles fust, we next. Yer see the animiles wuz here all bunched, an' it wuz their game ter git between them and camp, cut their lariats an' stampede 'em up the river."

"Well, Harry, I don't see but what we are in for it sooner or later. We can't fight the whole Ute tribe, that's certain. We've got to do something soon or there won't be one of us left to carry the news back. Everything tells me that we've got to fight."

"Yes, an' it ain't goin' ter be long, 'cordin' ter my rec'onin', either," said the old hunter, with a dubious shake of the head.

The subject was thoroughly discussed at breakfast and a long consultation held afterwards in which every man joined.

"Well, after all our talk, what does it amount to?" said Barrington. "We are here, surrounded, perhaps, by five times our number of Utes. They

mean deviltry we all know as well as we know that the sun shines, but until they do something our hands are tied. If we should see these devils creeping onto camp at night we couldn't shoot until they fired first—otherwise the people in the East would howl us down as 'murderers of peaceful Indians.' We don't dare separate and go about our several duties. If we did, few, if any, of us would ever be heard of again. We can accomplish nothing in the shape of work by keeping together. If we who have work to do go out we leave camp and the mules at the mercy of the Utes. There is only one thing——"

"Look, fellers, there comes three o' them devils now," said Bob.

"Yes, an' walkin', which means that their whole outfit is just acrost that hill yonder. Utes ain't walkin' Injuns. Them bucks is headin' straight fur camp, too," said the hunter.

"And that one on the left is Piah himself, too, or I'm blind," said Todd.

"Yes, that's the chief himself," said Barrington, "and they are coming on business, too."

When within three hundred yards of camp the chief held up his hand, palm forward. Barrington replied by holding up his palm in token of peace and the three Indians walked into camp.

"How!" said Piah, holding out his hand to Archer.

"How!" returned the white chief, taking Piah's hand.

"How! How! How!" and with a "How" for each the three bucks went the rounds of the camp.

With these preliminaries the two bucks accom-

panying the chief squatted upon the ground, leaving Piah standing.

"No see 'Big Chief,'" said Piah, glancing around as though looking for this mythical official.

"Big Chief is in Washington. What do you want with him?" asked Professor Archer. The red man did not seem to comprehend.

"Speak to him, Shep, and ask him what he wants with the Big Chief." Shep jabbered away some unintelligible jargon. Piah still seemed at a loss to understand. Then one of the other Indians spoke two or three words to him, as though explaining what Shep had just said. Suddenly a frown swept over the red chief's countenance and he straightened up haughtily.

"No Big Chief yonder"—pointing to the east. "Big Chief here!" pointing to Archer. "Say Big Chief in San Luis, now say Big Chief yonder! White man all lie! all cheat Injun. Big lie!"

"Knock the ratted redskin's topknot off!" shouted Bill Slade, jumping forward. But Barrington and Bob White caught him.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Bill! Back out of this," said the Lieutenant savagely. "You'll get all the row you want before long." Bill growled, and, keeping his eye on Piah, stepped back, but not until Professor Archer asked him as a favor to himself to do so.

"Now, Shep, tell this fellow I'm the Big Chief, and that we haven't time to talk. Ask him what he wants." Shep spoke again to the chief. The latter, ignoring Barrington and speaking directly to Shep, replied entirely in his own language.

"He's mad now, and you won't git no more English out o' him!" said Harry to Barrington.

"He says we've got to go, and go in two suns. He means two days. He says two days—no more."

"We will go when we are ready and not before! Tell him so, Shep, and tell him that the cavalry from Rawlins will be down here, catch him and hang him to the first tree if he gives us any trouble." This speech was duly interpreted to the Indian, who had doubtless taken in its meaning as Barrington spoke.

"He says he and his people ain't afeered of soldiers or 'slevay' men, and that there won't be none of us left to git word to Rawlins if we don't skin out o' this," said Shep.

Barrington turned to Archer and the two held a consultation in tones so low that the others did not hear. Then the Lieutenant turned and said:

"Shep, tell this fellow that we are not killing his game or interfering with him or his people in any way, and that we are going out as soon as we get through with our work." Shep repeated this several times to the chief before he seemed to understand it. Then suddenly, with a sweep of his hand as though to say it was useless to talk, he said:

"No more lie! All lie! Big horse-solder (Barrington) lie. Piah heap buck yonder. Slevay man not go two sun Piah kill—kill—kill!" and he struck himself fiercely on the breast three times. Professor Archer was about to say something to the chief, when Barrington stepped forward and interrupted him.

"Let me speak to him, Professor, if you please.

Tell him this, Shep, that we will go back and see the Big Chief, and if he says we must stay out of Piah's country we will do so, but if the Big Chief say 'no,' then we will come back with soldiers and kill every Ute in Colorado."

This speech, when interpreted, was answered by the warrior with only a sneer. Turning to his two followers, he said but a word and they arose and, without another word, the three strode out of camp and disappeared over the hills without so much as a glance back.

Replying to an inquiring look from Professor Archer, Barrington explained:

"Gentlemen, it has come to a point when something must be done and what I said was only a ruse to gain a little time. If something hadn't been done we should probably have had this whole gang down on us to-night. We must move now, and backward, too—but not back. Boys, get your packs on as soon as possible. In the meantime, Harry, you and I will take a little scout around the hills and watch these fellows. You had better go up the branch here and I'll follow the river up to the bend."

An hour later the pack train again forded Grand River and moved eastward over the prairie.

"Keep your mare back, George; don't let her travel too fast. We don't want to cover much ground to-day," said the Lieutenant, as he joined the train a mile farther on. Then he rode from man to man, giving each one instruction. Just what the Lieutenant's plans were no one but Professor Archer knew, but individually they knew what was expected of them, and all the packers

had served in some capacity under military direction before and they understood that their duty was not to ask questions.

Two hours later Barrington, again leaving the train as it was passing through a valley between two stretches of mesa two or three miles apart, galloped off northeastward and soon disappeared from view. Harry had not been seen since he left camp.

Following the Lieutenant's instructions, the train was not hurried, but was kept going at an easy pace. There was much speculation among the packers as to the meaning of the retreat. That it was not a real retreat all knew, but what the Lieutenant's scheme was none could guess. Shep thought it might be that the train would be taken back near enough to the mountains to cross, if necessary, and that one of the party would then be sent across the range to the nearest town, from which a telegram could be sent to Fort Rawlins calling for troops at once. Jack Sargent scouted this idea.

"The Lieutenant knowed Piah meant business or he never would o' turned tail this way. An' if we stayed this side o' the mountains long enough ter send word ter Rawlins, them yaller legs wouldn't find nothin' hyar but coyotes a-gnawin' our bones." By yellow legs Jack meant cavalry.

"Yer right, Jack. But what the Lieutenant's drivin' at beats me."

"Well, he ain't doin' this fur fun, I rec'on. That feller Barrington ain't one o' the retreatin' sort, he ain't. You kin bet yer boots thar's goin' ter be a scrap afore many suns."

Thus the morning wore away and the steady tramp was kept up. Toward noon a horseman's figure was seen far off to the north. The figure was approaching and when Professor Archer put his field glass to his eyes, he suddenly pulled his horse in and called a halt.

"Boys, that's the Lieutenant. He is motioning for us to come that way. Head your mare north, George; turn the animals this way, Bill."

The moment the move was made Barrington ceased his motions. Instead of waiting for the train, he turned and rode north, evidently expecting the party to follow. Scarcely had the course of the train been changed when another horseman came galloping across the plain from the river. It was Harry. He soon joined the party and his first question was for Lieutenant Barrington.

"He is off yonder," replied the chief, "and he has just motioned us to come that way."

"Jist as I thought he'd do," said the hunter.

"Where is he heading for, Harry, do you know?"

"I rec'on he's prospectin' fur a place I see him a-lookin' at t'other day as we kem this way. I see him takin' in a rocky ridge on the prairie up thar whar there's a big gully runnin' down ter the river. I says ter him, 'What yer lookin' fur, Lieutenant, lost something?' 'No,' says he, 'I've just found something—this yere place is the best nat'ral defense again Injuns I ever see. Maybe we'll have ter use it 'fore long.' "

"Well, Harry, where have you been and what have you seen since you left camp this morning?"

Breaking camp.

"I've been t'other side o' Mount Bross and beyond them bluffs across the river." Then Harry rode closer to the Professor and said in lower tones: "An' I've seed enough ter tell me we ain't goin' ter git ter the Lieutenant's fort any too soon."

"What is it, old fellow?" asked Archer quickly, for he knew the old hunter well enough to know that he wasn't given to false alarms, and that something of serious importance had taken place.

"Them Utes don't never mean ter let us out o' here now that we're in. The whole gang has took off their saddles and everything, putty nigh, but their bare skin. They are gettin' ready ter round us up afore we reach the mountains."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

As the old hunter talked he kept looking back toward the river uneasily, and then at the lazily moving mules.

"What ails yer animiles, Shep? They don't appear ter have much steam on."

"Well, the Lieutenant told us not ter hurry; said we didn't want ter travel too fast ter-day."

"I rec'on he meant by that that he wuzn't goin' farther than that fort o' hissen—an' it can't be fur from here now," explained the hunter to Professor Archer.

Several times the Professor saw Harry scrutinize the prairie back toward the Grand River bluffs.

"Take my glass; is a great deal better than the naked"——

"Quick! Let me have it a minnit," said the old hunter, grabbing them from his chief's hand. Then he glanced through them, but only for an instant.

"Boys, them's Utes an' we're in fur a race. Whip up them mules. George, take off that durned old bell—quick. Don't start yet—they can see us plain enough. Wait till we git down behin' that rise in the prairie yonder, then go it fur all you're worth, boys."

"Which way are they moving?" asked Archer, hurriedly placing the glasses in their case.

"They're on t'other side o' the river. They're headin' up stream, thinkin' we are goin' ter cross above hyar. Look ter yer guns, fellers, fur if they see us hurryin' they may make a break for us." All was excitement. The packers, the moment the rise in the prairie to the northwest covered them from view of the Indians, who were themselves but dots of color in the distance, and only to be seen by the sharpest eyes, now put spurs to their riding animals and rode from mule to mule, giving the poor brutes the lash without mercy.

"Git up thar, Jehoshaphat! Zell, you! Dolly, wake up thar ur I'll"—whack! whack! whack! And for a mile even the pack animals were kept in a gallop. Then Barrington was seen riding back. When he discovered the train moving at such a rapid pace, he suddenly pulled up his horse. Then he was seen coming at breakneck speed to meet them. He did not cease to give his horse the spurs until he was within speaking distance. Then breathlessly he asked:

"What is it? What's the trouble, Harry?"

"Utes!" said the hunter, indicating the direction of the Indians by a jerk of the head.

"Moving this way?"

"Yes, an' headin' up stream—t'other side. We didn't hurry till we got behind the rise yander."

"Turn to the right up this arroyo, boys, and keep in it till we overtake you. Come, Harry, let's watch these bucks. It won't do to lose sight of them long." The two left the train and kept straight ahead. Soon the ground rose so rapidly that Harry dismounted, followed by Barrington. Leaving their horses, they crept to the top of the rise and soon had a view of the whole river bank for miles back.

"Git that telescope o' yourn out, Lieutenant, and look acrost thar 'mong them cottonwoods. See anything?" For fully five minutes Barrington scanned the prairie on both sides of the river.

"No. Take the glass yourself, Harry. Maybe you know best just where to look for them."

The hunter occupied two full minutes in getting the glass adjusted to his eyesight. Then he watched the shores of the river for five minutes more. He saw nothing but the long stretch of prairie to the river and the somber escarpment upon the other side. There were no signs of life except now and then a jackrabbit leaping awkwardly through the sagebrush. The hunter was about to lower the glass, when he quickly put it to his eye again. He saw something, and it moved, but it was not a jack rabbit. It was an Indian.

"Steady there, Lieutenant—I wonder what that

buck's up to anyhow?" The Indian was alone and skirting hurriedly along the near bank of the river, putting the quirt to his pinto at every step. Then he was lost to view behind the hills below.

"Come, quick, let's git up this holler a little ways an' keep an eye on that buck." The two hurried along, stooping to keep themselves hid behind the rise until they reached the upper end of the washout or ravine. Harry, who was ahead, suddenly stopped and caught Barrington by the arm.

"Stop! There's that buck comin' up this hill; lie down; lie down!" and the two dropped to the ground. The hunter cocked his rifle. Barrington had not seen the Indian yet, but, following Harry's example, he cocked his rifle, ready for use.

"Sh!—he's stopped! Peep over, Lieutenant. See him? What's he up to, anyhow? Lookin' fur our trail!"

"That's it! He's looking the ground over now. There he goes along that hollow as fast as he can peg. He'll hit our trail back there not five hundred yards. Watch him, Harry, and see what he does when he sees it—look!—quick! Keep your eye on him."

The Indian was so close now that the glass was not necessary and Barrington put it up, and the two, with cocked rifles, followed the movements of the redskin, who was mounted on a beautifully marked pinto, or "calico" pony.

"There! He must be on our trail now! He's off his pony—yes, he sees it, the red devil!"

"Yes, he's struck it! An' fur a plug o' good navy I'll drap him whar he stands."

"No! Don't do a thing until they commence it. We must not begin this trouble—let them do that!" said Barrington positively.

"Oho! Mister Injin, what are ye up to now?"

They saw the red scout walk hurriedly along examining the ground closely. Then he stopped, shaded his eyes from the western sun and looked back toward the river. Several times he raised his hand aloft and waved it back and forth. Then again he shaded his eyes and looked. This performance he repeated several times.

"Say, Lieutenant, give me that glass o' yourn a minnit.' Quickly the glass was produced and the hunter looked in the direction toward which the scout was signaling.

"Yes, siree, bob! Thar he is, another buck over again that bank yonder wavin' his hand, too—an' I ain't no doubt but there's a whole string of 'em from here ter them bluffs. That's the way them devils telegraph, an' this feller's tellin' 'em that he's struck our trail and that we've gone farther up the river."

"How are we to get out of this without his seeing us, Harry? And it won't do to let him follow the train another step—we don't dare let him see where we're going to camp." But the buck had discovered the two heads raised above the ground and mounting as though he had seen nothing, he galloped leisurely away in a direction opposite to his fellow-telegraphers, as though on the search for antelope.

"He's a sly dog, that Ute—an' he saw us plain

as ef we'd been standin' ten feet in front of him. He'll change his course when he gits out o' sight and he'll go like a streak t'other way. Thar! Look, didn't I tell ye?" The pinto was for one brief instant seen far down the table-land, skimming toward the river with all the speed there was in him, then the hills shut him out from view.

"Now, Harry, let's put as fast as these two bronchos can carry us and catch that train. They must be a mile ahead of us at least, and——"

"Say, Lieutenant, ain't you a-headin' the train fur the bunch o' rocks you wuz lookin' at t'other day comin' down?"

"Right, old boy, and we can't get there any too quick."

"We've got ter git thar quick, but we won't be so blamed quick a-gittin' out, I'm thinkin'." Then Harry related what he had seen in the morning west of Mount Bross.

"This buck signaling over there proves that you are right. We haven't a minute to spare. We've got to get into that fort of mine in self-defense, but how we'll get out is another question. One of us has got to get out after dark to-night and strike for the nearest telegraph line and send word for troops. If we don't there's no telling where this thing will end." Meanwhile the two were not sparing their animals, and it was not long before they reached an elevated point from which the pack train was seen winding its way across the table-land. Giving their bronchos the spur, they soon galloped up beside Professor Archer, the two horses panting heavily with the exertion of their long run up grade.

"Turn here, boys! To the left—there for that bunch of rocks!" shouted Barrington. The train was hurriedly turned in the direction indicated. Even Professor Archer, who knew something unusual had occurred and that the Lieutenant had some definite plans, asked no questions, but rode about with the others, quickly whipping and wheeling the pack animals northward toward the river.

It was an exciting moment. Yet nothing was heard but the sharp crack of the packers' whips or their low curses as some tired mule lagged or got out of its place in the scurry of the moment. The "bunch of rocks" indicated by Barrington was one of those ledges frequently seen in this country where the earth had washed away from the point of a ridge, leaving an almost circular wall of rock, in this case about two hundred feet in diameter. Inside the rock wall the ground was flat, smooth, and grassy. The height of the rocks above ground varied from three to ten or twelve feet. There were two open places, or gateways, where the mules were gotten through by the removal of the packs.

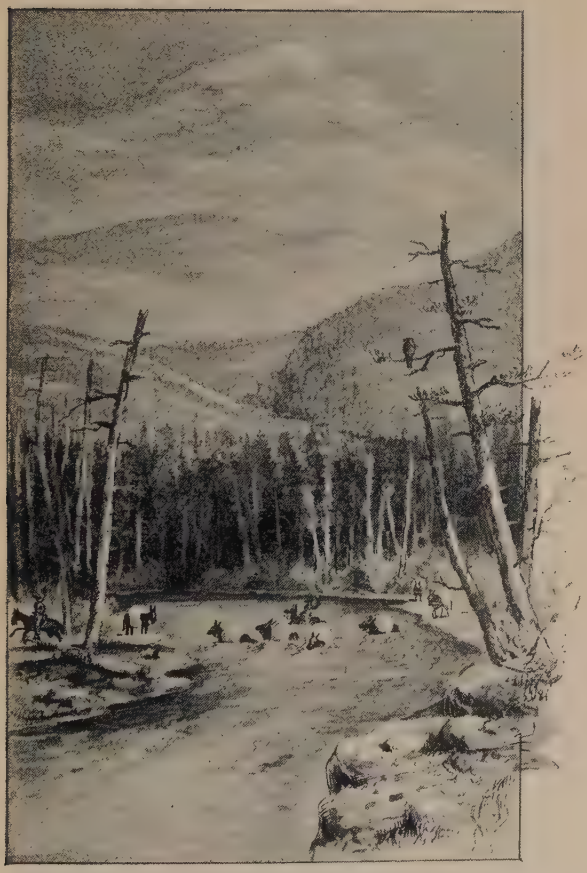
When the last animal had passed into this inclosure the sun was far down in the west, and Barrington ordered camp to be made as quickly as possible. All aparajoes and camp chests were placed close against the only openings to the natural fortress. Then loose rock and bowlders were gathered and piled at convenient crevices all around the rocky wall, forming loopholes in all directions.

The moment the men got behind this barrier

of rock they recognized the wisdom of the Lieutenant's selection. The ledge commanded an unobstructed view of the country in every direction. To the east and southeast there was a rapid fall for a hundred yards. To the west and south the slope was gradual to the plain two hundred feet below. Directly north the ground was comparatively level for fifty yards, when suddenly the escarpment of the river bank was reached and a bluff of rock as straight as a wall ended forty feet below in a forty-five degree slope to the water's edge made of loose rock and earth that had for ages been wearing away from the bluffs above. From the river bank into the very heart of camp a washout or ravine was cut like a huge letter V, the sharp end ending in camp, while the outer ends at the river were two bluffs separated by two hundred feet space. The bottom of this ravine reaching to the river was steep, but full of bare rocks forming a safe and easy path to the river even for the animals.

The situation of the camp was at once seen to be an ideal one for defensive warfare. It was a stronghold that might be held against an enemy numbering a dozen to one as long as ammunition and provisions held out.

It would be impossible for an enemy to approach from the north without coming up the ravine, and it would be simply madness to attempt this with one defender stationed at the top of the cut with plenty of ammunition. With the cut forming a complete barrier across the north and the steep declivity to the east and northeast, the area of approach to be defended was narrowed



Swimming Grand River.

down to the south and west. And in neither direction was there so much as a sage brush or bowlder to afford protection to a skulking savage for half a mile.

"Lieutenant," said Professor Archer, "I congratulate you on the selection of this spot and on the foresight that prompted you to remember it as a place of retreat in case of trouble. It could not have been better if made to order."

"Thank you, Professor," replied Barrington modestly, "it's all in one's training. If these rocks had happened to present some lesson in geology, doubtless you would have remembered them better than I. I looked upon them from strictly a military standpoint and saw their strategical value. It's a magnificent place for defense, but, first of all, we've got something else to do. Shep, Bob, Mr. Negley, Ned—you four take your places as sentries and don't show an inch of your heads above these rocks, but keep a sharp lookout. At ten to-night you will be relieved." The four were stationed at the four points of the compass.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Now, Professor, some one of our party has got to steal out of here to-night and get across the range and telegraph to Rawlins. It is not, and never has been, Piah's intention to let us get out of here. And neither has it been my intention to go until we are forced to it. If we've

got ammunition enough I'm satisfied we can hold out here for a long time, or at least until we can get a troop of cavalry down here from Rawlins. Jack, come here; you are acquainted with the passes across the range and my place is right here Will you go?"

"Jist as you say, Lieutenant."

"When?"

"Right now, before dark. If we wait till dark them reds may have us rounded up like a herd o' steers here. I must git out o' sight o' this place in ten minutes. Git yer message ready, Lieutenant," and before he ceased speaking Jack had thrown his saddle over his broncho and was drawing the cinch.

"Here, George, you black rascal, put some bacon and hard tack in them saddle pockets quick, or I'll peel the wool off yer topknot."

In ten minutes more Jack had slipped out one of the breaks in the rocks and his horse was sliding rapidly down the steep hill on the east or mountain side of camp. Skirting around to the southeast, in order to take advantage of a depression that would hide him from view for a mile or so, Jack turned in his saddle and, waving his comrades adieu, disappeared upon his dangerous and important mission as though he were going for a pleasure ride.

"This may be a fool's errand I'm sending Jack on, but from what Harry and I have seen to-day I believe I'm justified in the act," explained Barrington to Professor Archer.

"Yes," said Harry, coming up at this instant with Barrington's field glass in his hand, "an'

Jack didn't git out o' here none too soon either. I've been watchin' the river down thar beyond them cottonwoods an' there's Injuns there ur I'm blind."

But it was getting too dark for even a field glass to separate skulking redskins from the river bank if they were there, and Barrington went from man to man seeing that cartridge belts were full and that every inch of the surrounding country was closely watched. Meanwhile George was passing out a cold supper of hard biscuit, cheese, and dried beef, for there could be no fire and consequently no coffee.

It was an exciting time for Ned. He could not help feeling flattered at the responsibility of his position as one of the guards at such a momentous hour. But there was no more vigilant eye in camp that night than his. And as one by one of the party dropped off to sleep and the regularity of their breathing told that they were in the land of dreams the more watchful he became. The night was clear and chilly and the starlight made it possible to see a long distance. How would the trouble begin? Would he see a stealthy form crawling from the shadow of yonder ravine? Or would he suddenly see a hundred savages pump into view and rush up the hill with their hideous yells? How loud a rifle shot would sound this quiet night. How startlingly loud the snoring of the sleepers sounded. What an age it seemed before Jack could reach a telegraph station beyond the range, and how much longer it would be before they could expect soldiers to reach them. These and a hundred other thoughts

passed in rapid succession through Ned's mind as he peered out into the uncertain starlight. Suddenly he started. A hand touched his shoulder.

"Are you awake, boy?" It was Harry's voice.

"Yes," answered Ned.

"Well, it's ten o'clock now. Go to sleep, and I'll take yer place. Don't waste no time thinkin' of Injuns now, for we may not see a feather for a week. Git all the sleep you can." Ned obeyed, but left his post with regret.

Barrington himself had taken Shep's place and had directed Todd, Wilson, and Harry to relieve Bob, Negley, and Ned, and Bill Slade was assigned as an extra at the head of the gulch with Todd. The guard relief had been conducted so quietly that an enemy within a few feet of camp would never have suspected that behind those silent rocks upon the table-land there lay fourteen watchful, desperate men determined never to yield until their last cartridge was gone.

To those on the watch the long hours of the night seemed endless. Eleven o'clock, midnight, one, two, and all was well. Again the guard was relieved, and while Barrington and the others crept into their little tents for an early morning nap, Professor Archer, Beuchler, Brady, and Guns took their places to complete the vigils of the long night.

Professor Archer relieved Harry, Brady was assigned to Barrington's post on the west, Beuchler was stationed at the south wall, and Guns at the head of the gulch.

Barrington had chosen the second watch of the night for himself and had taken the precaution

of adding an extra guard, believing that if the Utes appeared at all during the night it would be toward midnight, when they would naturally imagine camp would be in its soundest slumbers. But nothing had yet disturbed the quiet of the night. Even the prowling coyote with his mournful yelp was not heard. There was even a portentous silence that Harry, the old hunter, did not like. He could not sleep. For an hour he lay with no inclination to drowsiness. Then he arose, and taking his rifle crept to the side of Guns. That worthy was wideawake and vigilant.

"What brung you out hyar?" he asked of the hunter.

"Couldn't sleep! It's too still to-night ter suit me."

"Yer right, pard, an' thar's suthin' up ur I'm a liar. Ain't heered a coyote ter-night." To these two sons of nature the absence of the usual night sounds meant much. Of books they knew nothing, but in the years they had lived upon the open plains with the ground for a bed and the skies their only spread they had learned to read nature's moods as a child reads its red-lettered primer. And to-night they read an ominous chapter in the book of nature. The silence was too intense to be long unbroken.

"Reminds me of the night on the Big Horn when we wuz watchin' fur—" Harry's speech ended abruptly. Both had at the same instant thrown the skirts of their hunting shirts over their gun locks to muffle the cocking of their rifles. They had heard a noise; a noise that would have been imperceptible to less experienced ears or else

taken for the scampering of a gopher across the rocks. The two peered through the blackness of the gulch to the river, nearly as black, below. Both men were crouching close against the rocks with rifles leveled for action, while they listened for a renewal of the sound. There was no uncertainty as to its location, for both had brought their rifles simultaneously to bear upon the left bank of the ravine just above the river bank.

For a moment there was silence,—then Harry felt the pressure of Guns's foot. The latter had seen something. It was but a shadow, but a shadow of what? The outline of every projection the size of a man's hand against the river had been carefully noted by the uncouth guardsman during the hours he had lain there watching in the night. He now saw a shadow that had not been there before. But it was only a rock after all? For it was as still as the everlasting rocks themselves. No; it moved—it grew larger—and now the head and shoulders of a savage was silhouetted against the river. Again it stopped, and again Harry felt the warning pressure of Guns's foot.

"Don't shoot!—them's the Lieutenant's orders —till ye must!" whispered the hunter. But the skulking savage had heard the whisper. His rifle flashed in the darkness and scarcely had the bullet flattened itself against the rock behind which Guns crouched before the latter's rifle cracked savagely upon the night air and the Indian disappeared.

Instantly all was commotion in camp. Barrington sprang from his tent and as man after

On the sage-brush plain.

man emerged he ordered them to their places behind the walls. Harry jumped to his feet and glided swiftly from guard to guard, warning them not to shoot until they were sure of their mark. Not a word was spoken except by Barrington and Harry, who were everywhere giving hurried instructions in low tones. Harry returned to Guns's side followed by Barrington.

"One or more?" whispered the Lieutenant.

"One!" replied Guns without turning his head. For a moment there was silence. Then came the crack of a Ute rifle from the west, followed by one from Bill Slade's. Now the air was rent with piercing yells and shadowy figures rushed up the hill. They were met by a dozen rifle balls. Harry jumped to Bill Slade's side and peered out for an instant, then he rushed back to the head of the gulch.

"This way, Lieutenant—bring two more men here. That's only a bluff—here's whar they're comin'."

"Here, Brady—Ned—Wilson—watch this hollow, and——"

A dozen black shadows were seen rushing into the gulch below. A circle of fire swept down upon them from above—then the clink—clink of six Winchesters sounded and six cartridges were pumped into the magazines. More shadows swept into the hollow and another volley of fire met them. Bill Slade and his comrades were pumping and firing at the stealthy savages upon the western slope, and the crack of rifles sounded from every quarter of the rocks.

"Quick, boys—once more—now"—crack! crack! and the shadows below hesitated.

"Here, Bob, this way—Now, boys, once more! Quick! they're running!" Another circle of fire flashed from the hollow. Clink! Clink! Clink! Clink! and as the retreating savages disappeared behind the rocks below another volley rang out. Splash! Splash! Something had dropped into the river.

"How is it, Bill?" asked Barrington, rushing to the side of the big packer, who, with Todd, Beuchler and Professor Archer, were pumping and cracking away upon the west.

"They've stopped—bless 'em—but there's some of the skunks layin' there yet—mebbe they're good Injuns."

"Ready, fellers," said Harry, who still remained at the head of the hollow. "We've drapped some of 'em and t'others'll be back in a jiffy tryin' ter drag the bodies away—there"—Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack—crack! and another splash was heard in the river below.

"Hang the luck!" and Ned was hammering away savagely at the back of his rifle. A cartridge shell was jammed in and he could not force it out.

"Here, take my gun," and Harry thrust his long rifle into the boy's hand. Then with a sharp stroke or two he loosened the shell, pumped another cartridge into the barrel and handed it back. But no more shadows appeared below. Firing had ceased.

"Good! Boys!" said Barrington, "we've silenced them for a time at least. Fill your magazines while you can and don't waste a shot." There was a lull in the fight. Harry and Barrington hurried

from man to man around the entire circle of rocks, exchanging a word here and there. Peering through a crevice in the rock overlooking the steep hill upon the east, the old hunter saw a form. It was edging stealthily and swiftly toward the shadow of the hill. Quickly the hunter ran to the gulch.

"Here, boy, come this way!" and he grasped Ned by the shoulder and hurried him to the opening upon the east.

"Thar he is. See that red skulking 'long thar ter the right? Take him, now—quick, ur he'll be gone!"

Ned's rifle came to his shoulder as quick as a flash. Then its sharp crack split the air. A yell, piercing and savage, followed and the figure disappeared.

"Ye sp'iled that feller's breakfast, I'm a-thinkin'," said Harry, patting Ned upon the back. "That red's carryin' your bullet, boy, ur he'd never yelped that-a-way." There was another lull, the silence broken only by the click of rifle cocks.

"Be ready, men! They'll be at us again," and Barrington passed around the circle of defenders, glancing out at every loophole. Harry and Ned now hurried back to their post at the head of the ravine. Guns was wrapping his wrist with a piece of buckskin.

"What's the matter?" asked Ned.

"Hit in that last scrimmage, I rec'on," replied Guns while he endeavored to get a string about his bandaged wrist by the aid of his teeth. But Ned came to the poor fellow's assistance.

"Wait a minute," said he, "that buckskin will

make your arm sore," and he slipped into his tent and soon appeared with a roll of linen strips, and with these he carefully bound the bleeding wrist. Guns's wound proved to be the only casualty on the side of the whites. A minute later several flashes of light were seen in the north, following one another in regular succession like signals. All eyes were turned in this direction. Harry jumped to his feet.

"Back thar, fellers—go back—quick," he shouted to those stationed upon the south and west who had stepped back from their places to look at the lights. "Back! Back! That's done ter git ye off yer guard; they'll be at us frum t'other side in half a minute!" and the old hunter, pushing Ned ahead of him, rushed to the south side followed by the others. And none too soon did they reach their posts, for a score of savages were almost under the rocks. Then a dozen rifles flashed from the walls and the volley was followed by the yell of Utes as they rushed madly on, their rifles belching viciously. Another volley—and another—and still another! and the savages wavered.

"Quick! Once more!" Crash! and another circle of fire swept the hillside. Crash! and another deadly volley followed. Then the shrieking savages stopped. Crash! and they turned and rushed for the shadows below. Crash! Crash! and the volleys followed them, and dark figures were seen dropping, to rise no more. The Utes were retreating pellmell. Crack! Crack! and two rifles rang out at this instant from the head of the ravine. Two more shots followed—one

from the south and another from the east walls.

"Steady! Fill your magazines, men!" shouted Barrington. Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Rifles were flashing everywhere. Dusky forms were darting hither and thither upon the plains below and the flash of their rifles was answered quickly by those of the whites. It was growing lighter. The gray streaks of morning were appearing in the east. The savage forms were more distinct—and larger, too.

"They're on their ponies, boys," shouted Bill loud enough to have been heard in Denver. "Now comes the fun! Give 'em h——l!" and as the Utes swept around at the foot of the hill they were relentlessly followed by the wheel of fire from the rocks above. The peculiar zing! zing! and the tell-tale thud of their bullets against the rocks never ceased. The yells of the demons now grew furious and they surged back and forth in single file, sending a hailstorm of lead at the little band of whites. Lighter grew the morning and soon the forms of the ponies and their riders were distinctly seen.

Crack! Cr-cr-cr-ack! ack! and a volley of fire spit from the rocky stronghold. Two ponies tumbled headlong, carrying their riders with them. One was upon its feet again instantly, but its rider lay motionless. Quickly the other savage jumped to his feet. His own pony lay still in death. Like a flash he leaped upon the back of his dead comrade's pony only to drop dead with Mr. Beuchler's bullet in his heart.

Yip—yip! yip! and the wild yelp grew fierce as the savages saw their warriors dropping about

them. Crack! and Harry's rifle laid another Ute upon the plain. The ravine at the north was the salvation of the whites. The Utes could only dash to the river's edge, whirl around and again gallop back like mad, circling the deadly rocks until the opposite side of the gulch was reached.

"Load, boys—quick! Here they come all bunched! Now wait until they get right in front —now—ready—fire. Cra-a-a-acck! went fourteen rifles simultaneously. Three ponies dashed to the ground and four riders tumbled to earth.

"Bully, boys!" roared Bill Slade. "Give 'em hell an' lead in e'kal proportions!

"The eagle's a good enough bird for me,
He is! He is!"

Another volley cut short Bill's song, and three more Utes dashed headlong to the ground. Then a cheer went up from the little band of whites. The Utes sped off upon the plains, not willing to again brave the deadly fire from the rocks. Nor did the savages stop until the hills covered them from view.

CHAPTER XXX.

GEORGE now passed rapidly from man to man. The faithful cook who had used his rifle unflinchingly since daylight had slipped away when there had been a lull in the fight and was now passing around great thick sandwiches of bread and ham.

"George," said Bill, "you're a angel!—a durned black one, but a angel jist the same!"

The tired animals quickened their pace.

"Be watchful, boys! Back to your posts! They'll be on us again before we know it!" and as Barrington spoke he shoved cartridge after cartridge into his empty magazine. The entire outfit wore the look of veterans. Hair was unkempt, and faces blackened with powder and dirt. Guns was leaning against the rocks, his wounded arm tucked in his shirt, his mouth full of tough ham while he kept his watchful eye upon the plain below.

"Boys," said the Lieutenant, "I move we give three cheers for Guns, the only man who has spilled blood to-night." And three heartier cheers never went up than those given the brave fellow whose alertness had saved the whites from surprise.

"Oh, shut up! Youse fellers'll spile my hearin'! You're wuss'n them Injuns out thar!" and Guns chewed complacently at his sandwich and watched the plains. At this instant a loud "hallo!" was heard down the ravine, and George was seen with a bucket of water in one hand, wildly brandishing the other arm.

"Come down heah, Mistah Archer, heah's fo' o' them dead Uteses."

"You'd better hustle up that holler ur they'll be a dead nigger down thar, too!" shouted Bill. But George, oblivious of danger dipped another bucket into the river and leisurely climbed the rocky steps to camp. Barrington, who had already been making an inventory of "good Indians" upon the plains, slipped down the ravine and soon returned.

"That's eleven that I'm certain of, boys. And

it may be twice that many." The Indians had been seen in their mad rushes to reach down from their ponies, grasp the bodies of their dead comrades and gallop away with them. Five ponies were lying dead within sight.

"Ned, hand me my glass, please; I want to see something," said Professor Archer. As the chief reached to take it, he said:

"Look!—here they come—quick, boys—to your posts!" and fourteen rifles bristled from the rocks. The Utes were coming like a whirlwind across the plain.

They were heading straight for the rocks. Would they dare face the storm of bullets like that? But suddenly the savages wheeled and strung out into single file, again circling around the deadly hill above them. They were met with a volley that staggered them and no less than six were seen to reel from their ponies. Again their bullets rattled against the rocks or went viciously zing! zinging! all too close to the heads of the whites.

"Make every shot tell if you can!" cried Barrington, and again the rattle of rifles sounded the death knell of savages.

One warrior seemed reckless of danger and his pony was always closer to the whites than the others and his rifle seemed never to be empty.

"Say, Lieutenant! Here!" called Harry, and the old fellow pointed to the Utes as again they whirled about—"that's Piah himself—the one on the yaller pinto! See!" and the hunter thrust his rifle between the rocks.

Barrington saw him take deliberate aim, and

above the volley that was let loose upon the redskins as they passed he heard the crack of Harry's long rifle. Then the yellow pinto reared and almost fell back. His rider jumped to the ground, but was on the pony's back as quick as a flash, lashing the wild animal with his long lariat. Again the animal reared and plunged. The rider struck him savagely across the head with his rifle. The lariat flew out and then back against and around the rider's legs. Again Harry's rifle cracked. The pinto threw his head wildly in the air and almost fell. Meanwhile the whole band of Utes had swept past and around to the northwest.

Now the Ute was seen struggling to release his leg from the lariat while the wounded pony dashed headlong up the hill, every step threatening to be his last. The pony was rushing right upon the whites while its rider made vigorous efforts to free himself. Like a flash Brady jumped upon the rocks and down the hill. The struggling Ute's gun was knocked from his hand by the plunging pony. Barrington vaulted over the rocks, followed by Bill Slade. Then the pony reared, plunged, and threw the Ute to the ground, and with one wild leap into the air fell dead. Stunned by the fall, the Ute staggered to his feet only to be seized by stalwart hands and borne struggling up the hill.

A yell of triumph went up from the little rock fort—Piah was their prisoner!

Four of the savages—the last that had passed just as Piah's pony dashed up the hill—now whirled their panting cayuses and galloped back, their rifles cracking at the venturesome whites

who held their chief. It was a critical moment for Brady, Barrington, and Bill, but at this instant another figure sprang from the rocky wall and ran like a deer, intercepting the advancing warriors and raining bullets at them as fast as he could pull the trigger of his rifle. It was Guns. The first Indian, who was almost upon him, tumbled from his pony at the first shot. The next one fell almost at the same instant. Then a third reeled in his saddle and his pony fled wildly back over the prairie.

Meanwhile an indescribable scene of activity was going on. The three whites were half carrying, half dragging the struggling chief toward the rocks. The entire band of Indians, realizing what had happened, were sweeping back again and bullets were ploughing the ground up in dangerous proximity to the captors. But in another instant the prisoner was inside the walls. Held in Bill's strong grasp, and realizing that further resistance was useless, the savage lay glaring at the throng while cheer after cheer went up and hats were thrown high in the air.

"Give them another volley before they get away —quick, boys!" and Barrington's order was followed by a dozen rifle balls whizzing after the savages, who had turned when they saw the whites were safe behind the walls.

"Good! Good! Boys, this fellow lying here is worth a million dollars to us! Three cheers more!" shouted Barrington, and again the triumphant yells were given. Again, again and again the cheers rang out. Above all was heard Bill Slade's voice:

"He's a bird that is always attendin' you see
To biz—to biz;
He give the red Injins a mighty black eye!
An' he walloped the British an' didn't half try,
An' he's still on deck this glorious Fo'th o' July!"

As the chorus arose on the clear air of morning the retreating redskins halted upon the plain far out of rifle's reach and listened. Their chief was gone. He was a prisoner in the hands of the whites. Ah! and at the same instant another was found missing! Where is Guns?

"Here he is—killed!" shouted Ned, and at the same time they saw the boy bound over the rocky wall and down the hill.

"Back, boy! Back! For the love of God, back!" shrieked Archer. But the boy rushed on. The Indians saw the move and galloped back. Then they saw him grasp a prostrate figure in his arms and struggle to drag it up the hill. Quickly Harry sprang over the wall as the Indians dashed forward, their bullets ploughing the dirt up all around the boy. The old hunter seized the boy and at the same instant the whites sent a volley of death among the Indians who were now within range.

"Give 'em another one like that, boys, and I'll fetch him in!" and Todd vaulted over the rocks, rushed down, shouldered Guns as though he'd been an infant, and Harry and Todd with their burdens bounded back into the camp at the same instant. But as the hunter leaped upon the rocks Ned muttered a muffled "Oh!" and threw his head back. Harry caught him and held his head up.

"Water! Boys—quick—he's hit!" All rushed

to the side of the wounded boy—except Bill, who was literally cobwebbing the Indian chief in a mesh of horsehair lariat.

Ned's face, white as death, was leaning upon Harry's breast. The old hunter was staring into the boy's half-closed eyes while great tears rolled down his weather-beaten face.

"Whiskey! somebody—gimme some whiskey," said the old hunter huskily. Half a dozen flasks were thrust toward him. Pressing one to the boy's colorless lips, he poured a few drops into his mouth. A gurgle and Ned seemed to be choking.

"It strangles him—water—water!" Then the boy moaned and opened his eyes.

"He's killed—poor Guns!" he murmured faintly.

"Yes, poor Guns is dead!"

Now there was a flush of color in the wounded boy's face, and he attempted to raise his head. Meanwhile the blood from his shoulder was trickling down over Harry's hunting shirt.

George had quickly spread several aparajoe blankets upon the ground and now the grizzled hunter tenderly laid his youthful companion upon them. Lieutenant Barrington knelt at the boy's side.

"To your posts, men," he shouted, "don't forget!" But Todd, Brady, Wilson, and Shep had not forgotten and were unceasingly pegging away at the redskins who now wavered with uncertainty. It was clear to the whites that they were puzzled. Their chief was a prisoner. Just what tactics to pursue they did not know. For a few minutes they gathered in a circle far out on the plain and

a pow-wow followed. Then they dashed down the hills and disappeared.

"A little water, if you please, Mr. Barrington," and the wounded boy's eyes opened.

"Yes, Ned, open your mouth—here it is! Does it pain you, boy?"

"No, but I feel tired."

"That's from loss of blood. He is weak. Give him a little more whiskey, water and sugar, Harry." Soon Ned turned his head and looked around.

"Where is Harry?" he asked.

"Here I am, boy. Right here," and the old fellow took the boy's hand and stroked it affectionately.

Meanwhile, as Bill gave the lariat a final knot about the captive's arms, he growled:

"Ef that boy thar dies—by God above, I'll cut your greasy throat!" and from his terribly earnest, ferocious scowl the savage instinctively drew back.

When the Utes disappeared far out upon the plains, Todd, Brady, Archer, and Beuchler lifted the body of Guns as tenderly as they would that of a child, and laid it in a protected corner of the camp. Then they straightened out the limp limbs, crossed the helpless hands over the breast, and covered the corpse with a blanket. The tears of four strong men dropped upon the cover as they arose—tears that were pumped from the very bottom of their aching hearts, for the little band had unconsciously become welded together into a chain of true friendship and brotherhood, and this was the first link broken. Poor Guns had died bravely doing his duty. Through his rough exterior there

had shone the light of gentleness, of friendship for all who gave him a kind word, and of faithfulness toward those who aided him. For Professor Archer, who had treated him with kindness from the morning on the prairie when he rode into the camp of the strangers, Guns would have risked his life willingly. No one felt more keenly the loss of this poor tramp of the Western Plains than did Professor Archer, whose eyes filled whenever they glanced over at the aparajoe blanket covering the lifeless form.

Barrington, who had had some little experience as a surgeon's assistant, in dressing Ned's wound, found it to be through the fleshy portion of the back over the shoulder blade, ranging forward and out the arm below the shoulder. No bone had been touched, yet the wound was a painful one. With care there was no reason why it should result seriously. The boy had so far recovered from the weakness occasioned by loss of blood that he smiled as Professor Archer approached and knelt at his side.

"Well, my boy, you look as chipper as a lark. Those rascals haven't hurt you very much, though, Lieutenant Barrington tells me, and it won't be long before you are around again as good as new."

"But they've killed poor Guns. I saw him fall, but he got up again and I didn't know they'd killed him until he put his hand to his side and fell backward."

"Yes,—but, there now,—you must think of other things. We caught Piah, you know. There he sits tied to those rocks. Bill hasn't left him a minute for fear the scalawag will get away."

"Here, Ned, my boy, take this—George jist made it—good and hot—some beef broth and crackers," and the old hunter fed the boy and talked to him of the Big Horn country where they would some day go on a hunting trip. Harry had been childish with glee since he learned that Ned's wound was not necessarily dangerous.

"Ye'll have ter hurry an' git well so ye can rip some more o' these Utes up the back with that gun o' yourn. Tell ye, boy, ye fit like a sojer to-day, an' there warn't a man in the outfit that done better."

Piah, the captive, sat sullenly glancing about him. He had refused to reply to all questions put to him. But once Shep passed and the chief spoke to him.

"Boy shot?" he asked in the Ute tongue.

"Yes," replied Shep.

"Die?"

"No!"

"Good—good! Boy good fight! No 'fraid—warrior like man, good, no die."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Lieutenant Barrington now stepped to the middle of camp and said:

"Gentlemen, we have here a prisoner who is worth more to us than a regiment of cavalry. Piah is in our hands and we must make good use of him. We've got to get word to his bucks in some way and that before night, too. Shep, tell

him that we want to talk with one of his men, and ask him which one he'd rather we'd talk to."

Shep communicated this speech to the chief. At first he refused to answer. For some moments Shep talked without avail. Then the chief mumbled something entirely unsatisfactory.

Barrington now stepped in front of the captive and the sullen redskin saw that the officer was in deadly earnest.

"Tell him, Shep, that we mean every word we say, and that if there is another shot fired into this camp to-night or a feathered head seen within rifle shot we'll riddle him with bullets."

Piah glanced quickly at Barrington and then looked straight into Shep's face as he interpreted the Lieutenant's threat.

"An' he knows we'll do it," said Shep. "See the way he looked at me when I told him what you said, Lieutenant? That redskin is scared, an' if you don't pay no further attention to him he'll be willin' to talk 'fore dark comes on."

"Now, George, build a fire and give the men some hot coffee," said Professor Archer. Bob and Todd volunteered to bring water, and Brady built the fire, while George prepared his dinner. In an hour the grateful aroma of steaming coffee and the smell of hot biscuit filled camp. But dinner was served to all at their posts. Not for one moment did the vigilant Barrington lose sight of the fact that they were still surrounded by Utes who might take advantage of the slightest neglect upon the part of the guards to rush upon camp again.

Ned grew rapidly bright and cheerful, though

He raised his right hand aloft.

his flushed face and quickened pulse showed that he was inclined to be feverish.

"Now, don't talk, boy. Listen all you want to, but just lie quietly and rest," said Professor Archer.

It was long after noon when dinner was served, and the refreshing coffee had never tasted better. Then once again there was naught to do but watch the plains for the reappearance of the savages. Piah grew restless. Both Barrington, Shep, and Archer noticed it. They expected it, but they did not allow the captive to suspect. When the red chief saw Barrington scanning the prairie with his field glass he could not disguise his nervousness. If his warriors should again swoop upon the white man's camp, would not the soldier chief do as he had threatened? When Shep passed him the chief spoke.

"What is it?" asked the packer.

"Soldier chief looks with glass eyes. Does he see Piah's warriors?" By "soldier chief" he meant Lieutenant Barrington.

"No, but if they do come again, here!" and Shep tapped his revolver holster significantly.

"Warriors no come if Piah say no come."

"How will they know when Piah says no come?"

"Soldier chief make three, one, two smoke, then warriors come, heap talk, no fight."

"Say, Lieutenant, this red rascal has wilted. He says if you'll make three, one, two smoke, his bucks will come and pow-wow."

"What does he mean?"

Without further ado Shep gathered a handful of dried grass. This he covered with an aparajoe

blanket. Then with a match he lit the grass, pulling the blanket close about it so as to allow no smoke to escape. Suddenly he whipped the blanket off and a thick ring of smoke rapidly ascended. Scarcely had it left the blanket before Shep had another blanket full and this followed quickly the first. Then a third went sailing high above camp. Shep had another handful of grass, but paused for a few minutes. Then the performance was repeated once. Another pause of several minutes, then two more rings of smoke, curling and rolling in graceful folds, ascended.

"Thar, Lieutenant, that's 'three, one, two smoke'; now watch the prairie and see if the skunks read that signal."

All eyes were turned upon the plain. Piah's quick black eyes watched the faces of the men as they peered over the rocks. A cloud of dust was seen rising above the hills west, and then there was an exclamation.

"Here they come!" A horde of savages were sweeping over the plain. They came like the wind, their quirts raining blows upon their ponies at every jump.

"Ready, men!—quick—aim," shouted Barrington, but when the savages were yet out of rifle shot, they halted so quickly that their ponies were jerked back upon their haunches. Barrington saw them, through his field glass, pow-wowing and pointing to the whites' camp.

"Here are your bucks! Now what do you want?" asked Shep.

"Tell Otter-tail Piah talk."

Shep jumped upon the rocks and raised his

hands aloft. At this the savages rode closer, two or three of them holding their hands up, palms forward.

As the entire number continued to advance Shep waved them back. They halted and for quite awhile seemed to be at a loss to understand. Then Shep jumped down and calling Bill to his aid soon had the ropes binding Piah to the rocks untied. Then they lifted the chief, yet bound, hand and foot, upon the rocks. Upon the sight of their chief another pow-wow was held and then one warrior advanced. Shep motioned him to advance. Soon he was within speaking distance, but he hesitated to come nearer. Shep called to him in his native tongue, telling him that the chief wanted Otter-tail. The messenger galloped back and soon a fine looking young warrior, mounted upon a blazed-face bay mustang, rode up. When he stopped Piah uttered but a word and without further hesitation the young chief rode up and, hobbling his pony, strode fearlessly into camp.

"Hear every word they say, Shep, and see that there's no deviltry," said Barrington.

For several minutes the young warrior and his chief engaged in earnest talk. Shep allowed not a word to escape him, and when Otter-tail turned to go, Archer called him back and handed him a slice of broiled ham and some slices of bread. These the young buck took stolidly, then he mounted and was about to ride off, when Professor Archer told him, through Shep, to send not more than four Indians up to take away their dead. This they did. Otter-tail returned to his band

and, after a few words with them, they all disappeared in the west.

Shép explained that the chief had issued strict orders that his warriors should keep far away and in no way annoy the whites or that they would kill him. He had told Otter-tail that he was afraid of the white soldier-chief and that nothing more must be done to anger him.

"As long as we keep him we are safe. You can bet yer life on that," said Shep.

Guard was kept constantly on the watch, and that night Bill Slade, Shep, and Bob White took turns in watching the captive, who was so bound to the rocks as to make his escape an utter impossibility.

The night after the battle was uneventful and when morning dawned Harry announced that his patient, Ned, had enjoyed a good night's rest. The old fellow had moved his tent over the boy where he lay to avoid moving him, and through the long night he had moistened Ned's parched lips and had given him a drink of fresh water whenever he had awakened.

Breakfast over, and a sad duty was to be performed. Guns was to be buried. It was decided that his grave should be just outside the walls of the camp. Todd, Beuchler, and Shep wrapped the remains in a blanket and carefully sewed around it a canvas pack covering. Meanwhile the grave was dug east of camp on the hillside.

At noon all gathered about the canvas sack and with bowed heads listened to the words of Professor Archer.

"Comrades, we are about to perform the last sad

rites for the dead. This, our companion of yesterday, is but a limp, lifeless piece of clay to-day. The soul that but a few hours ago quickened this poor body has taken its flight, and, as God is just, I believe this soul will receive justice at the gates of heaven.

"Cut away the rough stone and you find the purest diamond. Pry open the coarsest shell of the ocean and you discover the pearl of greatest luster. When we looked beneath the uncouth exterior of poor Guns we soon discovered a heart of gentleness, a grateful heart, true as steel, and free from the taint of selfishness. This homely body was but the outer covering of a soul that was too good to die and a merciful God will not allow it to be lost.

" 'Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

" 'As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.

" 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children.'

"There is nothing left for you to do, my friends, but to drop a tear upon the grave of one who proved himself worthy of the tears of brave men."

Then the canvas sack was slowly borne to the grave on the hillside and in a few minutes the grave was filled and piled high with heavy stones.

Piah, the captive chief, watched the strange ceremony over the dead with the most intense in-

terest. It was an awe-inspiring scene for the redman, and, although he understood few of the words uttered by the white chief, the services impressed him greatly. He saw the deep feeling of sorrow among the whites over the death of their comrade. Perhaps he felt that when the whites had finished their services for the dead there might come a reaction against himself, the instigator of the trouble resulting in the death of the white man. At any rate, that look of careless stolidity that had settled over Piah's face when he first realized that he was a captive had vanished, and in its place was a restive, uneasy look.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Five days had passed since poor Guns was laid to rest. Breakfast had just been served, but all of the little garrison were upon the rocks looking eastward over the tableland.

They were watching the figure of a horseman approaching in the distance from the east.

"Yes, boys, it's him! That's Jack! and Jack of trumps he is, too!"

Jack it was, and in half an hour more he came leisurely riding up the hill. His pony was lame, and he was leading another mustang saddleless, but with a lariat decorated with feathers, showing it to be an Indian's pony. He hesitated and drew in his horse when he saw the dead war ponies scattered about, but when he looked again he saw his comrades waving their hats and heard them welcome him back with a cheer.

The pinto threw his head wildly in the air.

But when he rode up and was about to dismount he saw the newly made grave piled high with stones.

"It's Guns, Jack! The poor fellow was the only one to go." For a moment the rugged packer eyed the grave and there was a suspicion of moisture in his eyes as he turned and asked:

"But you licked 'em all right?"

"Did we lick 'em—say now, Jack," and Bill Slade grabbed his comrade's hand and gave it a squeeze that made even Jack wince. "Lookee here! Do we look like a passel o' yaps that 'ud let a few thousan' red niggars lick us. See thar!" and Bill pointed to Piah. The chief had the customary scowl upon his face. But it was noticed that Jack himself scowled as he eyed the prisoner.

"Why—Jack—what does this mean?" asked Todd, touching Jack's coat sleeve that was stiff with dry blood that showed from beneath a rough bandage wound about the arm.

"Oh, it hain't worth mentionin'—only I rec'on that red devil thar's surprised ter see me."

"Explain; what do you mean. What is it?"

"When did ye have the fight, boys?" asked Jack.

"The morning after you left; the fight commenced before daybreak."

"An' ye ketched his nibs, same day?

"Yes."

"Well, that's what them two—say, fellers, I'll tell ye quick how it wuz—and, George, you git me suthin' ter eat ur I'll die standin' hyar. It wuz jist this way. When they shot that telegraph o' Cap's thar off ter Rawlins from Bowlder I jist stopped long 'nough ter round up some hot coffee

and beefsteak, and then I hit the trail fur camp as hard as the pony could work it. Nuthin' happened till yisterday mornin', jist as I wuz gittin' out o' the Divide, this side. 'Twas in that little canyon nigh our fust camp this side. Two Utes flipped out o' them rocks and the'r fust shot downed the pony, with a bullet through his leg. One of 'em wuz a ten-footer. 'Course, I thought they wuz all aroun' and I says ter myself, 'Jack, old hoss, this is whar you lose.' The one nighest had his gun raised ter my head, but the big one knocked it down and tried ter club me. I see from their game they wanted ter ketch me alive. But I bored a hole big as a bar'l through the fust one an' just turned quick 'nough ter knock the big one's gun out o' his claws. But I broke mine, too, an' then I grabbed the red by the throat. We wuz nigh the edge of the canyon an' I tried ter throw him over, but, sir, that Ute wuz too heavy fur me, an' a little more an' we'd both jined the angels together. An' what wuz wuss he got my pony-gun (revolver) an' come near a-fillin' me with holes, only they all hit in the same place, fur I was holdin' his hand. By that time I had him by the other wrist and then I tripped him an'—well, sir, he took my gun with him, but he went, an' I'm out one pony-gun."

"Kill him?" asked Bill.

"No, Bill, I didn't kill him; he just nat'rally jarred hisself ter death on the rocks at the bottom o' the canyon; but I corraled the mustang that belonged ter the Injun that swallered my bullet—that's the hoss out thar. I didn't stop to look fur t'other pony." Harry glanced again over at the

new pony. Suddenly he jumped to his feet and sprang over the rocks and examined the mustang that Jack had captured.

"It's him! Jack, you've killed the redskin that shot the arrer at Perfesser Archer—this is the string-halt pony." Brady recognized the pony and said that Ned would, too. At the mention of Ned's name Jack glanced quickly around.

"Say, whar's the boy?" he asked earnestly.

"Here I am, Jack," called Ned from his tent. In another minute Jack was bending over the boy and patting his hands tenderly.

"Why, boy, you've got spunk 'nough in you fur a hull outfit, but you'll be out soon, don't fret."

"I'm well now, Jack, but Lieutenant Barrington makes me lie here till noon every day, that's all."

"Come, Jack, breakfast has been waiting ever since we discovered you coming over the hills. Ned, you can get up, too, since Jack is back, for we all want to hear of his trip," said Barrington.

At breakfast Jack was told about the fight, and he in turn detailed the trip across the range. Everyone agreed, from Jack's description of the actions of the two Utes, that they intended to make him prisoner with the idea in view of offering him in exchange for Piah, their chief. Without Piah the party would still be at the mercy of the Indians. The red chief was valuable as a hostage against any hostile demonstration of the Utes so long as the party kept together, but there was work to do, and it would be necessary for topographers, geologists, and others to go about their business. What was to prevent the Utes

from capturing some one of the party and then demanding their chief in exchange with a threat of killing the prisoner if the exchange was refused?

"I'll fix that all right," said Barrington, "and we will move out of here to-morrow and finish our work, and I guarantee we shall have no more trouble with Utes." Then, through Shep, Barrington stated the case to Piah.

"And now," said he to Piah, "we will send one of our men for Otter-tail, and you tell him that I say if one of our men is disturbed while at work, or that if an attempt to capture one of our men is made, or if one thing is done to interfere with our work, we will hang you by the neck with a lariat until you are dead!"

Barrington spoke calmly, but so earnestly that the chief well knew that the threat would be carried out and he anxiously inquired when the runner would go for Otter-tail.

"I'll go myself, now," said Shep, "fur we can see the smoke from your bucks' camp fires over the Grand River bluffs." Fifteen minutes later Shep was leisurely galloping over the plain toward Grand River.

Preparations were made in the meanwhile for marching. All felt that they were secure against attack as long as Piah was their prisoner, and, too, they felt sure that after the chief had another pow-wow with Otter-tail that work would be resumed without fear of the Utes molesting individual members of the party whose work might take them out alone.

It was almost sunset when Shep returned, ac-

companied by Otter-tail and two of his braves, all of whom seemed in a very great hurry to be gone. To them Barrington reiterated his threat, and said that if a single member of his party failed to come into camp at the proper time Piah would dangle from the end of a lariat.

Early the next morning camp was broken and after all had taken one last look at the grave of their brave comrade Guns, the outfit left the scene of their battle and plodded across the prairie. At night they again camped at the hot sulphur spring. While at supper Lieutenant Barrington remarked:

"Well, gentlemen, here we are where we left off. We've been delayed in our work, it's true, but what is a week's delay compared with saving our scalps?"

"I regret," said Professor Archer, "that we were obliged to call upon the commander at Rawlins for troops. We may expect them now at any minute, and had we caught Piah a few hours sooner we could have saved the boys their long horseback ride."

"Oh, that's all right. I'll bet the yellow-legs at Rawlins were tickled out of their boots to get a chance to stretch themselves after lying idle so long. The ride down here will be a picnic for them," said Barrington.

But no soldiers came. The message received at Rawlins was misunderstood and the cavalry after three days' march reached the Ute reservation on White River. The Utes in some inexplicable manner knew that troops were expected and they had beat a hasty retreat to their reservation, reaching

there ahead of the troops and, when the latter appeared, they found all the bucks at home, each one engaged about his own wigwam in some most innocent and peaceful pursuit, and astonished to learn that they had been suspected of doing anything wrong. This little ruse of the Utes accounted for the haste of Otter-tail and his two bucks to leave after their last pow-wow with Piah in the whites' camp. They were anxious to get back and join their band in reaching their reservation before the "horse soldiers" got there.

A week after the party had left the clump of rocks on the table-land that had served them so well against their red enemies, the train was far southwest of the hot sulphur spring. The mules were leisurely moving across the sagebrush plain. Piah, securely roped to a saddle pony which was secured by lariats to the saddles of Jack and Bob, rode with a sullen frown upon his dark face while occasionally his keen black eyes swept the prairie about him. It could not be that he hoped to escape or be released by his warriors, for he well understood that the first overt act upon the part of the Indians to free him would mean his instant death. Shep construed his uneasy glances toward the western horizon to mean that the chief was afraid his braves might be seen following the party in the distance and that this might aggravate the whites into carrying out their threat to hang him.

During the time the chief had been a prisoner Shep and Ned were the only ones to whom he deigned to speak. The pictures of horses and Indians that Ned had drawn in camp to amuse the

prisoner had all been carefully folded and kept by Piah, who seemed to have a real fondness for the boy.

Ned and Piah had made several trades in which the boy became the owner of a beautiful wampum collar and beaded tobacco pouch, in exchange for a tape-reel, a small spyglass and some water-color paints. But Ned had another souvenir of the battle that he prized very highly. This was Piah's rifle which Bill Slade had seized from the ground at the time he, Brady, and Barrington had grasped the fallen chief after his pony had thrown him. This rifle Bill had presented to Ned while he lay bleeding with his wound, with the remark:

"It's your'n by rights, boy. Poor Guns is gone an' you're the one that got the worst of the fight."

As the train plodded on to the musical clink of the spurs Harry and Ned rode together talking over the events of the past few weeks.

It was a beautiful hazy Indian summer morning.

"It's gittin' on in the fall now, an' you must git a black-tail an' a big-horn, boy, an' I'd like awfully fur ye ter git a b'ar ter take home. Rec'on b'ars is sca'ce 'round Washington, ain't they, Ned?"

"Oh, there isn't any game about Washington bigger than"— Here, Harry, whose eyes had been watching something in the distance, suddenly reined up Texas. For a minute he watched the prairie intently.

"Come, boy—quick—come with me!" and without another word the hunter galloped off. Ned gave Buckskin the spurs and followed at break-neck speed, darting through a prairie dog village and creating consternation among its short-tailed

inhabitants. Harry was making for a rise in the prairie half a mile ahead, and two-thirds the distance was gone before he even turned his head to see if Ned followed.

"What is it, Harry?" The hunter did not reply, but, jumping to the ground, threw the reins over Texas' head and motioned Ned to do likewise. Then, following Harry's example, Ned ran ahead, stooping lower and lower as he approached the top of the rise.

Harry, who was fifty yards ahead, stopped, stepped backwards a few feet and fell flat on his stomach. Raising his rifle, he turned and motioned Ned to approach. Ned dropped upon his hands and knees and crawled rapidly to Harry's side.

"Git yer gun ready, boy, and watch the top of the hill thar an' shoot quick as they come in sight."

"Harry, what is it?" asked Ned breathlessly, but before the hunter could answer a great pair of antlers appeared over the hill not fifty yards ahead. Then the head of a noble elk appeared with ears pricked up and nose scenting the air. The stag was closely followed by two does, all intently watching the distant cavalcade moving across the plain. Their curiosity proved their ruin, for they did not notice two enemies at their very feet.

"Take the stag—an' be stiddy, too. Are ye ready?—now, shoot!"

Crack!

Ned jumped to his feet and fired again at the

disappearing does. The excited boy was at the top of the rise in ten seconds. Then he threw his hat wildly in the air.

"I got him, I got him!" cried he, between whoops.

The old hunter and Ned were standing over the body of a magnificent elk.

"Harry, why didn't you shoot?"

"'Cause I wanted you ter git the stag. We don't need the does an' 'tain't right tre kill 'em fur nuthin'. I wanted you ter git yer elk, though, an' if you hadn't hit him I'd a done it fur ye, Ned."

The hunter hastily skinned the animal and taking off the antlers with the upper part of the skull, and the best of the meat, which he wrapped in the hide, packed them on Tex, securing them with two lariats. Ned was again congratulated on his success as a hunter. Professor Archer said he hoped he would not again have any more serious work for his rifle than shooting game.

"But you have proved that you can do more with it when it becomes necessary, my boy." Then he explained to Ned that the elk he had killed was a fine specimen of the American elk, or wapita the Indians called it, the largest of the American deer family except the moose. The wapita, he said, were sometimes found upon the plains in herds of a hundred or more. He told Ned he had never seen a finer pair of antlers.

"The elk is royal game, Ned, and you've got a trophy that any hunter might be proud of."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LATER in the day, while the train was in what had the appearance of being an endless sagebrush plain, Brady called to Ned:

"Here we are among the ant hills. Now I will show you something. Do you see these hills? Some of them are two or three feet high. Now let's get down and examine them." The two dismounted, and after the pack train had passed Brady continued:

"Ned, come here with your back to the sun. Look at the ground around one of these ant hills and then move your head from one side to the other—what do you see?" Ned followed Brady's instructions. Occasionally, as he moved his head, he would see a tiny object glisten in the sun like a drop of dew.

"That's it. Now when you see one of these little spots reflecting the sunlight, don't take your eyes off it, but just walk straight to it and see what you find." This Ned tried to do, but several times he lost sight of the bright spot before reaching it. But, making another trial, he found the glittering object and picked it up. It was a crystal of a beautiful dark red or wine color, and as big as a pea.

"What is it, Mr. Brady?"

"That is a garnet. You'll find lots of them here. Keep your head moving until you see one, then walk straight to it without removing your eyes from it—that's the only way to find them

Ned muttered a muffled "Oh"!

easily." Ned was soon picking up garnets right and left. There were many, and he soon had a handful, ranging in size from an eighth to a half inch in diameter. He worked eagerly and intently on all fours, and not until he had collected fifty or sixty of these rich colored gems did it occur to him to ask Professor Brady about them.

"Mr. Brady, are these garnets everywhere here on the prairie as thick as they are here?"

"They may be very plentiful anywhere here on the plains, but it's only among the ant hills that they are easily found. You see the ants, in building these villages of sand find the garnets down in the ground where they are excavating for their homes. Having no use for jewelry or gems, they consider them a nuisance, and they get rid of them by bringing them up and dumping them out of the little holes or doors you see there on the hills. If you watch carefully you may see them bringing one out, Ned; I've seen them do it often." Ned and Brady, both on their knees for a long time, watched the numerous little entrances to the hills. Ned saw many busy ants running this way and that as though engaged upon most important business, and once he saw a little brown bean or seed of some sort dumped out and rolled down one of the hills. There were plenty of these little hard seeds about the foot of the ant hills. He was growing discouraged when Brady called out:

"Here they come—quick, Ned—now watch them." There was quite a commotion just inside one of the holes leading to the interior of a hill. Several big red ants were seen inside the hole.

Then one of them came scurrying out. This ant, after running about on the side of the hill in an aimless, crazy sort of way for an instant, darted back. At the entrance he met another ant coming out. The two put their heads together and seemed to be holding a conference upon some vitally urgent subject. Then both went back into the hole. Meanwhile two other ants came backing out slowly, evidently pulling some heavy object. It was hard labor for the little fellows, but they tugged at it persistently. Inside could be seen one or two others. They were pushing the object before them. Then there appeared a garnet. Two or three times it seemed to grow too heavy for them to manage and once it slipped and rolled back a little way, but finally the industrious little laborers got it outside and down it rolled, carrying with it a little avalanche of sand from the side of the hill. The stone carried with it two of the ants, but they quickly righted themselves and freed of their burden they scampered hurriedly back into their hole. Ned picked the garnet up and put it into his pocket. It was a curious and entertaining incident to him, and both Brady and Ned enjoyed it greatly.

"Well, the ants have given me a handful of garnets. I'll give them something they will like better," said Ned, going to his saddle pockets and taking from them a bread and cheese sandwich which George had rolled in paper for him. Part of this Ned crumbled and sprinkled over one of the hills. Instantly this wonderful phenomenon of a fall of bread and cheese from the sky was in some mysterious manner telegraphed into the

depths of the ground and there poured out an army of ants. When Ned and Brady mounted their horses and galloped off to join the train they left the little fellows working like stevedores hauling, pulling, pushing and stumbling over one another in their rush to get the good stuff stored in their larders before something should come and rob them of it.

Camp was made that night upon the side of a rocky slope at the entrance to a rugged canyon through which the river ran on its way to join the great Colorado.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The following morning the scientific corps branched out upon their several duties, leaving the packers to guard camp and the prisoner. About noon, Piah, who was allowed to sit outside his tent, though bound and secured by lariats to picket pins, uttered a grunt of surprise and looked down the rocky hill side toward the river. All eyes were at once turned in this direction. A huge black bear was working his way up from the water's edge. The bear was "tacking," as bears have to do when going up hill; that is, walking a few steps across the side of the hill, then turning and walking in the opposite direction, all the time working up hill.

The bear was at least a quarter of a mile from camp, and, although he was approaching, Bill was afraid he would scent danger and retreat into the canyon and escape. Quickly grasping his rifle, he

ran down the hill, stooping and keeping behind the rocks as much as possible. Every few steps he would stop and peep over the rocks to watch the progress of the animal.

Whether the bear was engaged in the same game of strategy is not known, but those in camp for a few minutes lost sight of both. Then they saw Bill emerge from a clump of piñon bushes and crawl stealthily up behind a jagged rock. His rifle was cocked and ready for use. Slowly he arose so as to watch the progress of the bear. Cautiously he raised his head above the rock. At the same instant the head of the animal appeared over the other side of the rock within a foot of Bill. The surprise was mutual. Bill's hair stood upon end; so did the bear's. For an instant they eyed one another irresolutely. Then suddenly bear and packer turned and fled in opposite directions. When the bear was last seen by those at camp he was heading, as fast as his legs could carry him, for New Mexico, Arizona, or any other place far out of the reach of the packer's Winchester. Bill, when he discovered that his retreat had been seen by the others, stopped, picked up a stone and commenced hammering his rifle, and returned to camp vowing that a cartridge shell stuck in his gun or "he'd a-blowed the head off that b'ar." But during the rest of the season when the subject of bears was brought up in camp, it was noticed that Bill always took occasion to go out and curry down the pack mules.

Week after week passed. Professor Archer carried out his work without the slightest deviation on account of the Utes. The entire party felt as

A great pair of antlers appeared on the hill.

secure while they retained Piah as though they were escorted by the United States Army. The Ute Reservation itself was not neglected, and the work of the survey was conducted so close to the Ute villages that the tepees or wigwams could be plainly seen. Indians were frequently seen, but they took good care to keep at a respectful distance lest they should endanger the life of their chief. For all but Ned Piah never lost the sullen frown that had clouded his face since the day of his capture. But his stolid features would relax when he saw Ned return to camp in the evening, for the latter's kindness to him had awakened in the savage breast a feeling of genuine friendship for the boy. Ned often spent an hour or so drawing pictures and painting them in water-colors to amuse Piah. This gift of the boy's seemed very wonderful in the eyes of the Indian, yet more wonderful still it seemed to him was the "little stick" (lead pencil) that had so many pictures in it. When Ned presented the chief with a pencil he preserved it with great care, regarding it as a "great medicine stick."

The autumn days came on. The nights were growing cold, and the camp fire at night correspondingly larger. The party had worked to its western boundary and were now in the mountains north of Middle Park working east.

Three weeks from that day the train again reached the summit of the Ute pass in the Snowy Range on its return to civilization.

The season's work was done.

Professor Archer called a halt, and the faithful pack mules, after their long, laborious climb, stood

panting heavily. Piah, the Ute chief, was to be released and allowed to return to his people. As the whites stood taking a farewell look back upon the great valley of Middle Park, now purple with the beautiful haze of Indian summer, a feeling of sadness filled all hearts. Away yonder on the banks of Grand River they had left a comrade who had died a hero's death in defending his fellows against a savage enemy. It seemed hard that poor Guns should be left sleeping his everlasting sleep in an unknown wilderness. Only a short while before he had stood with them on this very spot looking down into the valley that proved for him, poor soul, the Valley of Death. For the living this great plain stretching out at their feet held memories pleasant and memories of sorrow; memories of cheerful camp-fire groups and good fellowship, of whisperings of danger, of alarm, of battle, of death, and of mystery. Here, sharing one another's pleasures, labors, hardships, and dangers, there had grown between all a bond of friendship true and strong. Now the little band was soon to be scattered by the fates to the four winds—to be severed for all time. To the strong weather-beaten men standing here now there seemed a mournful cadence in the sighing of the wind among the cold gray rocks and over the everlasting snowbanks. There was something melancholy even in the shrill call of the blue jay from the pines far below, for its cry had been associated with their daily life through months of comradeship in the wilderness—a comradeship drawing to a close.

"Bill," said Professor Archer, "you may now re-

lease your prisoner, and give him a pony, with something to eat on his way back."

Bill loosened the knots of the lariats and Piah was free. For a moment he stood irresolute, glancing quickly from one to another of his captors, then walking up to Ned and taking the boy's hand in his the chief uttered "Bye!" and without another word he mounted his pony and disappeared down the mountain pass.

ALL.